WIRE

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WWW.THEWIRE.CO.UK ISSUE 223 SEPTEMBER 2002 £3.30

Rapid Eye movements

BOREDOMS

Atom Heart
Charlemagne Palestine
Miami Bass
Yasunao Tone

Earle Brown
Cheb i Sabbah
Mr Lif
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Ladyfest
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Editor's Idea

Another month, another tottering pile of CDs that largely does nothing but fuel the prevailing IRE. That's not IRE as in fury, but IRE as in It's Really Experimental. IRE is the syndrome, unfortunately more and more prevalent, in which beleaguered press agents and desperate marketing types try to foist pop albums which contain a handful of numbers featuring a distorted drum machine, someone plucking the guts of a piano, and a hidden track remixed by Mike Paradinas, on those chin-strokers over at *The Wire*. (The other treat frequently on offer is A BJ – no, not what you're thinking, but A Bit Jazzy – pop albums with a guest saxophonist.)

IRE is the burned mark of the dilettante, the tattoo of the genre traitor, the last refuge of the terminally inane. I wrote a CD's worth of songs, but they didn't sound unique enough with just my sister and me on acoustic guitars. So we prepared a harmonium, contact miked a watermelon patch and sampled the hunger pangs of a starving toad. It's Really Experimental!

The Flaming Lips' recent *Yoshimi Battles The Pink Robots* is a kind of summation of all that's twisted and wrong in the current music climate. Considered purely on a sonic level, Dave Fridmann's and Scott Booker's production for The Lips is ravishing and sensuous. But heard too often, it quickly spills out an extreme unction of selfconscious ornamentation. The songwriting would appeal to anyone, myself included, who's moved to submission by the songs of John Martyn, Jeff Buckley, Neil Young or Talk Talk; and some of the, ahem, funkier arrangments show they've cocked an ear to early electronic groove sorties such as Sly Stone's *There's A Riot Goin' On* or Shuggie Otis's reissued *Inspiration Information*.

But something just ain't right. It's Really Experimental, so an awful lot of time and Warner Brothers' money has been spent on making a serviceable set of songs into a pack of creaking, wobbling, stuttering Frankenstein's monsters. Complexity and studio trickery form the backbone of some of the finest musics of the past century, of course – one thinks of the energy fields trapped within 70s Jamaican dub space, the rich personal mythologies surrounding the music of Sun Ra and Harry Partch, the unique composed soundworlds of Olivier Messiaen or Harrison Birtwistle; the obsessive stylistic refinements of Autechre, Evan Parker or Tony Oxley. The Lips' sound is impressive, but somehow it doesn't seem hard won. Gratuitously ingenious, in ten years it'll sound as clunky and dated as Todd Rundgren's *A Wizard, A True Star*.

The Yoshimi on the cover of this month's issue is the Yoshimi of the title (although The Lips' title track hommage is the least consequential ditty on the album). One of the mainstays of The Boredoms, and an astonishing drummer to boot, Yoshimi is the key component in Yamataka Eye's powerful conceptual view of the group's current direction (impossible to summarise: read all about it on page 34). By contrast, Boredoms are red hot right now. Although they haven't actually got a 'product' to sell anyone at this point – more's the pity – they have just played a handful of incredible live shows in the United States, UK and France, where their in-the-round group dynamic is supported by some intriguing theories of harnessed energies. They worship the very best qualities of music, no matter what the genre: irreverence, noise, speed; and they have ground a wholly new lens for scrutinising the role of a rock group. And guess what? It Really Is Experimental.

ROB YOUNG

WIRE

WWW.THEWIRE.CO.UK

Adventures In Modern Music

Issue 223 September 2002
£3.30
ISSN 0952-0686 (USPS 006231)

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London E1 7SA UK
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Fax +44 (0)20 7422 5011
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The Wire is published 12 times a year by *The Wire* Magazine Ltd
Printed by St Ives plc • Digital imaging and colour proofing by DP Graphics (www.dpgraphics.co.uk)
Website hosted and maintained by D-Fuse (www.dfuse.com)

USA: *The Wire* ISSN 0952-0686 (USPS 006231) is published 12 times a year by *The Wire* Magazine Ltd at a US subscription rate of $85. Periodicals postage paid at Middlesex, New Jersey 08846. Postmaster, send address changes to: *The Wire* Magazine c/o PO Box 177, Middlesex, NJ 08846. US agent: Pronto Mailers, 200 Wood Ave, Middlesex, NJ 08846

The Wire was founded in 1982 by Anthony Wood. Between 1984-2000 it was part of Naim Attallah's Namara Group. In December 2000 it was purchased in a management buy-out organised by the magazine's staff. It continues to publish as a 100 per cent independent operation

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Subscriptions (see page 100)

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London E1 7SA, UK
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subs@thewire.co.uk
www.thewire.co.uk

RATES (12 issues)
UK £36
Europe £50
USA/Canada US$85/£50
Rest of World £60 Air/£50 Surface

Distributors

News stands

UK, EUROPE & REST OF WORLD (EXCLUDING USA)
COMAG Specialist Division
Tavistock Works, Tavistock Road
West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 7QX
Tel +44 (0)1895 433800
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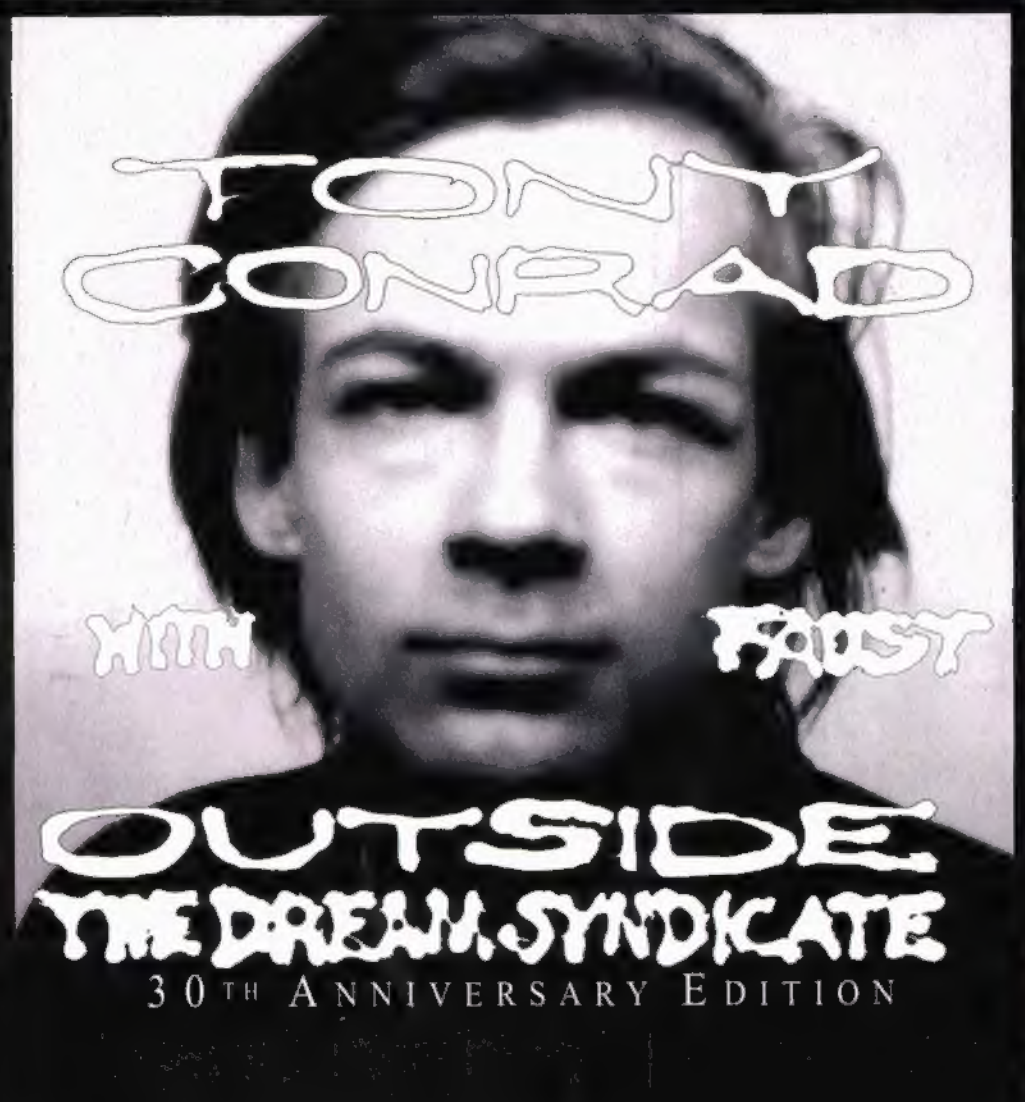

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—David Fricke, from the liner-notes

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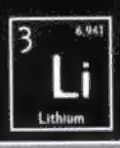

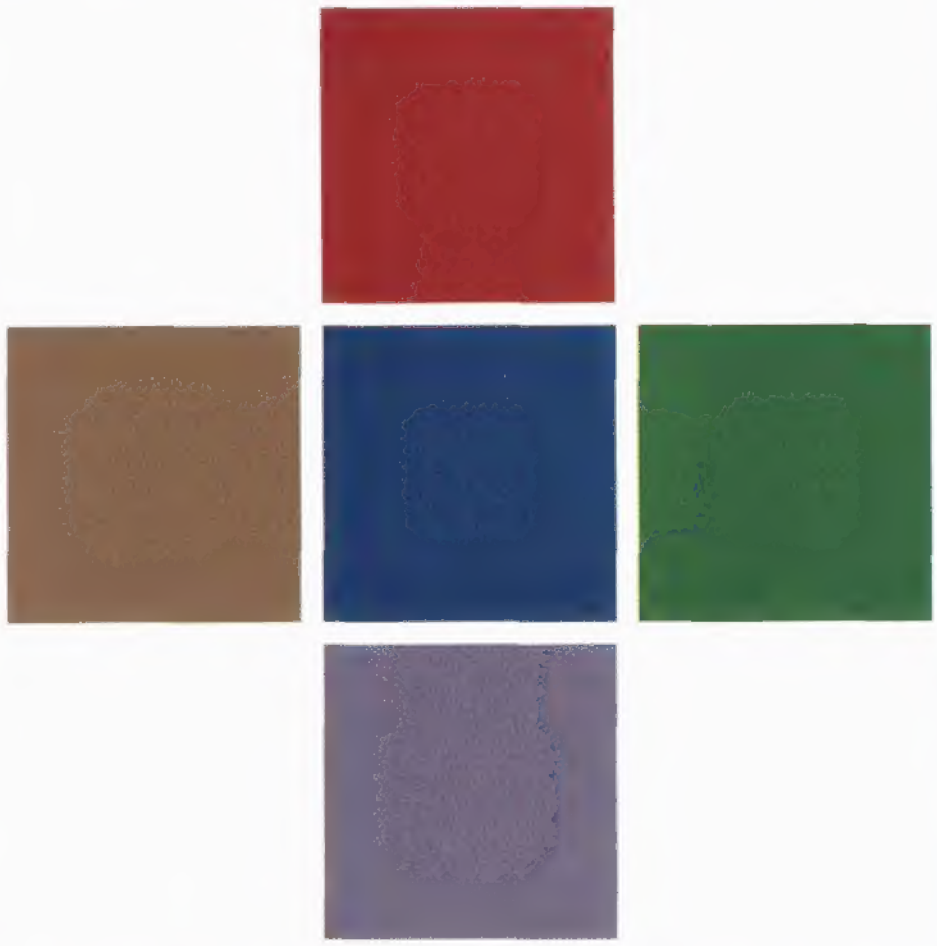

ELIANE RADIGUE ADNOS I-III

Eliane Radigue has composed for magnetic tape and electronic media since the late 1950's, when she studied with both Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry. From her independently built Paris studio, Ms. Radigue creates an organic ambience within which sound moves in a continual flow around the listener. Composed between 1974-1982 and previously unreleased, the *ADNOS* cycle presents a delicately continuous transformation, a fragile sonic texture. Ms. Radigue, inspired by the idea of moving water as metaphor for sound in motion, writes, "In the conch formed by sound waves, the ear filters, selects and emphasizes some areas of hearing, just as one's eyes would look at the shimmering of water: at the same time absent and multiple, oriented toward an outside whose image lives reflected in the inner universe."

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In a world of his own: William Parker

Tone it down

With regard to David Keenan's feature on William Parker (*The Wire* 222), the interviewer seemed content to let the bassist and bandleader wax spiritual on his apparently transporting playing experiences and hippy-dippy concept of the "tone world", while avoiding issues which might have been more pertinent.

Is confrontation a foreign concept to Keenan, or was he simply too busy gasping "Wow, man" to enquire about Susie Ibarra's recent exclusion from Parker's 'mayorship of the Lower East Side' and her accusations of sexism within it?
Ian Fenton via email

The article was full of material which located Parker in the changing landscape of New York over three decades. For example, Parker's tone world meets the 'real' world head on in his Vision Fest activities, among other initiatives. Leaving aside the fact that Susie Ibarra parted company with Parker nearly four years ago, it was clear from her interview in The Wire *220 that her fiercely idiosyncratic path has taken her far beyond the gravitational pull of Parker's tone world – Ed*

Sound and the fury

Re: Ken Hollings's review of the Sub Rosa compilation *An Anthology Of Noise And Electronic Music: First A-Chronology Volume 1 1921-2001* (Soundcheck, *The Wire* 221). Any opinion is legitimate, but it is also legitimately open to criticism. I personally enjoy a debate of ideas (controversy does not disturb me), but both parties must still share a minimum of common ground for a debate to take place. One can find our concepts "cute" or even stupid, but the fact remains that this is how we work – all these processes are in no way trivial abstractions: transhistorics, instability, a-chronology, floating foundations, rhizome progressions... Admittedly they are all open to criticism, but not in such a dismissive fashion – contempt has no place in a debate of ideas. They may annoy or irritate, I acknowledge as much, but they remain our working tools, aiding us in constructing a catalogue now holding around 200 titles. Irony and bad faith will never change that. Uncalled for envy and sarcasm will have the same fate. I therefore leave the reviewer to his fantasies, or Godzilla if he prefers, or even to his rights as a respectable critic – it will not hinder the pursuit of our explorations and our discoveries, whether it is in the publication of monographic discs, in our anthologies, our concerts, our films, or our writings.

When one demands rigour, one should also apply it to one's own work. When Hollings talks of Eisenstein, we suppose that he refers, in fact, to the montage effect conclusively demonstrated by Kuleshov (and not Eisenstein, his pupil, who merely used this process – it is a common mistake). His confusion surprises me further, as the journalist corrects me on details that still remain to be proven – such as *Weekend* or *Wochenende*. One could argue endlessly on whether Walter Ruttmann, a German (the lost 'n' in Ruttmann's name will be found again for the second edition, which should not be long now), had originally named his piece *Weekend* or *Wochenende* ('weekend' in German), but this seems futile, and more importantly, misses out on the essential.

Lastly, the criticism was nearly exclusively directed at the booklet – the customary way of proceeding. The impact a disc has on oneself is immeasurable – today, listening is a very difficult thing to do, even for those who are supposed to do it professionally. It seems that time is lacking to lose oneself in music. It is thus paradoxical that this spite, a touch surprising and misplaced, vainly exemplifies it.
Guy Marc Hinant Sub Rosa, Brussels, Belgium

Wrong turn to the right

Remarkable to find two examples of misdirected revisionism about two figures from the German cultural sphere in the same issue (*The Wire* 221). In his Soundcheck review of *An Anthology Of Noise And Electronic Music*, Ken Hollings writes, about film maker Walter Ruttmann, that a "fictional leap" has taken place in Ruttmann's biography by "claiming that 'Ruttmann soon abandoned his avant garde ideas in favour of Nazi ideology'". It is a matter of record that Walter Ruttmann did indeed refuse to "abandon the Fatherland in its hour of need" by collaborating with Leni Riefenstahl and glorifying the Nazi war machine in films like *Sieg Im Osten*. Avant garde aesthetic or not, Ruttmann traded artistic integrity for fascist ideology.

Meanwhile, Richard Henderson's review of the book about Darby Crash and The Germs, *Lexicon Devil* (Print Run), groups Oswald Spengler and Friedrich Nietzsche together with Adolf Hitler and Charles Manson under the collective term "fascist philosophers". While the latter pair's misanthropic credentials are of course immaculate, Nietzsche is done an injustice that the entire post-war period's historians of ideas have (more or less successfully) striven to correct. While Spengler did in fact hope in vain to exercise an influence on the Nazis, labelling Nietzsche a fascist is a canard. Aside from being fiercely anti-nationalistic, Nietzsche had no time for any nonsense about the superiority of this or that race/culture/civilisation; he was a philosopher of individual ethics, not of mass submission, which is what fascism is by definition. In a time when every single national election held within the European Union has tipped way over to the right and fascism seems to be a real alternative for a large sector of its electorate, we should neither casually excuse nor cast aspersions of "fascism" on this or that historical figure.
Stephen Fruitman Umea, Sweden

Word of praise

I'd just like to thank you for the wonderful article on Wordsound Recordings and Skiz Fernando (*The Wire* 221). As a fan and a friend of the label for many years, it made me very happy to see them get some

PHOTO: MATTIAS EK

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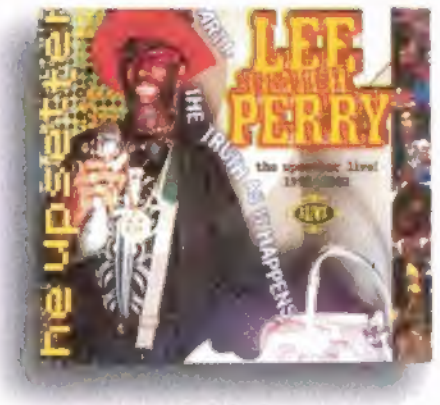

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love in Hua Hsu's excellent piece. Wordsound is more than a little ahead of its time, but their longevity is proof that it exists for a reason, and maybe one day people will finally stop sleeping.
Anna Klaft San Francisco, USA

Slurred note

Regarding Ben Watson's review of Larry Hicock's *Castles Made Of Sound: The Story Of Gil Evans* (Print Run, *The Wire* 221): like most exceptional musicians (Bach, Händel, Mozart, Ellington, Bill Frisell, Herbie Hancock, Jon Hassell and countless others), Gil Evans was able to navigate many musical waters, not bound by the stifling dogmatic compass Ben Watson appears to be following slavishly. Yes, the surface of some of Evans's work might be "incredibly commercial", just as the surface of, say, Mozart's work is "incredibly classical", but you can still tell Mozart's pieces from, say, Dittersdorf's in a few seconds, simply because there's more 'there' there. Similarly, while some of Gil Evans's work is exceptionally pretty (a crime in and of itself!), it stands miles apart from "restaurant decor".

Also, Watson's belaboured linking of Evans via Rodrigo to Franco/fascism is based in a school of thought so pathetically outdated, it would be downright cute if it weren't so damn insulting. In a case of "political-stylistic Sippenhaft", the mere fact that a piece was embraced by fascists apparently renders it toxic for the rest of time. Watson should consequently lead a public burning of Rodrigo scores to purge us from this impurity since, according to his logic, nobody should touch them lest they align themselves with Franco. If Watson intends to ban all music that was either (a) written or (b) embraced by fascists, communists, misogynists, racists or just plain assholes, there wouldn't be much left, would there?

Finally, *Bitches Brew* as the big evil conspiracy theory: "CBS's stirring showcase for their recently acquired Fender Rhodes keyboard." Please! You don't sell to a mass audience by employing an album that mainstream audiences find difficult to digest to this day. What utter baloney! I haven't read Larry Hicock's book, so I have nothing to say about the three or four short sentences where Watson actually addressed the biography itself. But I do know Gil Evans's music, and it doesn't deserve the cheap shots Watson heaps upon it. Maybe he should try to leave his ideological baggage disguised as background information behind and just listen?
Kubilay Üner North Hollywood, USA

Though I say so myself...

Ben Watson's review of the Gil Evans biography contains a glaring error. He states that there has been no other biography of Evans other than Laurent Cugny's *Las Vegas Tango* (which is not available in English). My biography, *Gil Evans, Out Of The Cool* (A Cappella, Chicago Review Press), was published last October in the USA, and has been extensively (and favourably) reviewed by several European publications, including the British jazz magazine *Jazzwise* (April 2002). In fact, my research is based on a wider variety of original sources than Hicock's, and has the musical and historical context that Watson finds lacking in Hicock's book.
Stephanie Stein Crease via email

Hey man, Heemann's the man

Re: The review of *Im Schatten Der Möhre* by the German group Hirsche Nicht Aufs Sofa (HNAS) (Soundcheck, *The Wire* 221). I think it is really important to mention that at the same time that Christoph Heemann released this record on Streamline, all five HNAS records were reissued on DOM America (see the Forced Exposure Website for more information). Many fans have waited for this to happen for years, and would be pleased to read a collective review on the HNAS oeuvre rather than a mere appendix to the work of Mirror, Mimir and others. This leads me to a suggestion: I enjoyed your several stories on Nurse With Wound, Coil and Current 93 a lot, but I always wondered why the most outstanding of all these groups, HNAS, never got a 'big story'. If you only listen to the work of HNAS from the perspective of today's electronica or plunderphonia, it is clear just how far ahead of their time they were. Listening to an HNAS record is comparable to a Coil live experience.
Dr Stefan Weber Salzburg, Austria

Your wish is our command: you'll find four of DOM's HNAS CDs reviewed in this month's Soundcheck. David Keenan interviewed Christoph Heemann in Bites, The Wire *162 – Ed*

Boredom threshold

Thanks for organising The Boredoms/John Cale gig at the Royal Festival Hall in July, half of which I enjoyed immensely. Ironically, the gig exemplified what's wrong and what's right about your magazine and the music you celebrate. On the face of it, The Boredoms set looked like it was going to be some sort of satanic tribute to the spirit of Rick Wakeman, but remarkably they managed to play continuously for more than an hour without ever sounding self-indulgent – they left us calling for more.

Cale, on the other hand, was a classic illustration of what you can get away with under the auspices of 'avant garde' practice. Leaving aside the point that the gig was supposed to be part of a percussion festival and there was nary a pair of castanets to be seen, what were you thinking? For God's sake, the man's a buffoon! After murdering a Dylan Thomas poem in what can only be described as the style of Hinge and Bracket (Noel Coward in drag), he then attempted to cover Elvis (plainly an act of extreme hubris) and botched that up as well. His own 'songs' seem to be the product of a chance meeting of a cultural studies text book and a blender: selfconsciously clever and absorbed by some embarrassing sense of his own myth. I knew much of the material already, but seeing it performed live was an epiphany. Yes, the emperor truly had no clothes on!

My point is that your 'music from the outer limits' criterion frequently means 'music up its own arse'. It should be part of your job to adopt a more critically discriminating attitude, both in review and interview. For example, I don't think I can recall any of you saying anything remotely inquiring about Improv, a genre which apparently can do no wrong (how many ways can you fall over a drum kit?), and many of your recent interview subjects have been allowed to get away with yammering pretentious, self-referential nonsense without so much as a challenge. At its best, *The Wire* is the most intelligent music magazine available on the market today – I rarely find an issue unchallenging or uninformative – just don't let it become a back-slapping club for silly gits and has-beens.
Peter Boughton Sheffield, UK

Charity begins at home

I was delighted to finally get my hands on one of those much coveted *Wire* CD openers at The Boredoms gig in London recently. A marvellous little gadget indeed: it took barely ten seconds of fiddling with it for my '30 going on three year old' housemate to slit his finger open, thus rendering him temporarily incapable of assailing us all with trite Christian rock on the house guitar. Believe me, I can't remember the last time I appreciated a freebie quite so much.
James Hadfield Sheffield, UK

Corrections
Issue 222 The Soundcheck review of John Russell's *From Next To Last* (Emanem) should have been credited to Julian Cowley, not Brian Marley.
The addresses for the Black Keys, Intoxia and 2o62 labels were omitted from the Label Directory. Black Keys, who released the Frank Wright Quartet's *Church Number Nine*, can be contacted at black-cherry-blues@wanadoo.fr. Intoxia, who release the Boris w/ Merzbow *Megatone* CD, are at 2-9-8 #202, Asagaya-Kita, Suginamiku, Tokyo 166-0001, Japan, info@intoxia-rec.com. William Basinski's label 2062 is at billy2062@yahoo.com.
Issue 219 The Jazz & Improv review of Fuchs/Bryerton/Smith's *3 October Meetings* mistakenly rechristened Damon Smith as Jerome. □

Coming next month

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With the October issue, all subscribers worldwide will receive a free copy of a new compilation of cutting edge sounds from Norway, to coincide with the Fertiliser festival of new Norwegain music at London's 93 Feet East. See the inside back cover for details

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Bitstream

News and more from under the radar. Compiled by The Trawler

Folk hero: Alan Lomax

The great American musicologist **Alan Lomax** died on 19 July at the age of 87. Along with his father John, Lomax was one of the key players in the preservation of the world's folk music traditions. The Lomaxes' field recordings rescued ancient songs from the relentless pace of modernity, introducing some of the world's most vital recording artists in the process: Woodie Guthrie, Leadbelly, Jelly Roll Morton, Muddy Waters and Son House. Lomax developed a system, called cantometrics, for analysing song and dance across cultures which has since become instrumental in musicology and anthropology. In 1993 Lomax wrote *The Land Where The Blues Began*, a mammoth documentation of Southern blues culture. Meanwhile, the Rounder label's 150 CD reissue programme of recordings from the Lomax archive, instigated in 1997, becomes a monument to his pioneering work. Tributes at www.alan-lomax.com >> HipHop trio **Antipop Consortium** have broken up after eight years and two albums. The group's debut album, *Tragic Epilogue*, was voted album of the year in *The Wire*'s annual critics' poll in 2000. Beans, High Priest and M Sayyid all have solo projects in the works, the first two for Warp, all of which have been made with APC producer Earl Blaize >> Next year's **All Tomorrow's Parties** in the UK will be curated by Autechre, and will take place between 4-6 April at Camber Sands. The line-up includes Bernard Parmegiani performing *De Natura Sonorum*, The Fall, Coil, El-P, Yasunao Tone, Cannibal Ox, Aphex Twin, Jim O'Rourke, LFO, Pita, Hecker, Sonic Sum, Mira Calix, Venetian Snares, Push Button Objects, Req, A Guy Called Gerald, Andrea Parker and a Skam Records room. In addition to Matt Groening's Los Angeles ATP festival in June 2003, there will also be an East Coast event in Asbury Park, New Jersey curated by Stephen Malkmus & The Jicks next September. Info: www.alltomorrowsparties.co.uk >> **Tsjok.com** is a new online resource with ambitions to become the central booking directory for "leftfield music". The site functions as a free noticeboard for record labels, booking agencies, venues, festivals and independent musicians and groups looking to set up tours and gigs throughout Europe. According to the owners of the site: "We're not a booking agency, we just develop and maintain a tool which makes the communication between artists/booking-agencies and clubs/concert organisers a lot easier." Go to www.tsjok.com >> Independent production company Somethin' Else have been commissioned to make an hour-long film about **Robert Wyatt** for BBC4. The film, entitled *Free Will And Testament*, will feature footage of Wyatt performing in a studio with a live group – his first public performances for 30 years >> New York 'computer folk' label Carpark will be distributing a new reissue label called **Acute** which is devoted to unearthing obscure DIY post-punk masterpieces. First out of the box in October will be a collection of Theoretical Girls' unreleased material. The group, featuring Glenn Branca, Jeffrey Lohn, Wharton Tiers and Margaret Dewyss, helped usher in No Wave in New York in the late 70s >> Another New York punk reissue comes via the legendary hardcore label **Ratcage**, which has relocated to Switzerland. First release is a live 1982 CBGBs concert featuring The Beastie Boys, Reagan Youth and The Young And The Useless. More info at www.ratcagerecords.com >> The Italian Abraxas/Get Back label continues its relentless reissue programme of avant jazz LPs first released by the French **BYG/Actuel** label in the 60s and 70s. New additions to the racks include previously impossible-to-find Fire Music classics such as Frank Wright's *One For John*, Anthony Braxton's *This Time*, Alan Silva's *Lunar Surface*, Steve Lacy's *Moon* and Gracham Moncur III's *Aco Dei De Madrugada* >> Following last year's acclaimed *Masses* album, which paired **Spring Heel Jack** with a bunch of New York's finest free jazzers, the Thirsty Ear label is about to issue *Amassed*, which sees the London breakbeat duo squaring up to a cast of Europe's most venerable improvisors, including Evan Parker, Han Bennink, Paul Rutherford, Kenny Wheeler and, er, Spiritualized's Jason Pierce. The album is released on 24 September >> *Wire* contributor Mike Barnes hosts a new weekly show on London's Resonance 104.4 FM (www.resonancefm.com). ***Scratching The Surface*** (Tuesdays 8:30-10pm) features new and old esoterica, a featured artist (everyone from Ron Geesin to Uchihashi Kazuhisa) and Riff Of The Week, a beginner's guitar workshop. Meanwhile, another Resonance FM show with a link to *The Wire*, *Diggers* presented by Edwin Pouncey, continues to broadcast on Tuesdays between 5-6:45pm >> Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia will be hosting the **Pulse Field** project from 13 January-28 February 2003. Curated by *Noise, Water,* Meat author Douglas Kahn, Pulse Field will feature "significant explorations in sound from all over the world, irrespective of aesthetic direction, technical means or cultural context". Artists are invited to submit work for consideration. Contact RS Thompson at musrst@langate.gsu.edu >> The World Forum For Acoustic Ecology is presenting **?... Acoustic Ecology...?** (sic) in Melbourne, Australia between 19-23 March 2003. With guest speakers such as R Murray Shafer and Hildegard Westerkamp, the symposium will cover the issues surrounding the interaction between living organisms and the sonic environment. For more information, point your browser to www.afae.org.au >> Pianist and teacher **Lewis Porter** is assembling a jazz encyclopedia for Routledge that he hopes will fill holes in *The New Grove Dictionary Of Jazz*. He has asked that any currently active jazz musicians contact him with biographical information at Lrpjazz@aol.com by 1 January 2003. On the subject of jazz books, after the success of his volume chronicling the making of Miles Davis's *Kind Of Blue*, Ashley Kahn has set his sights on the creation of **John Coltrane**'s *A Love Supreme* in a book published in October by Granta. □

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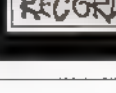

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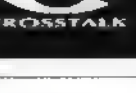

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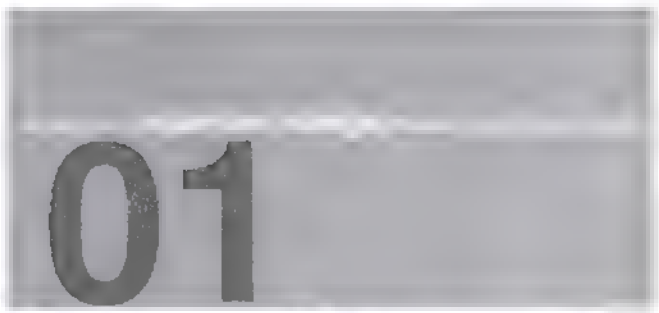

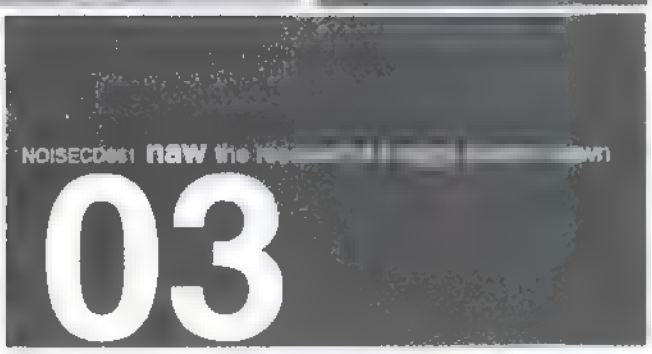

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Perched behind the decks at a San Francisco dance club, DJ Cheb i Sabbah stands out from the rank and file turntablists proliferating in the Bay Area – and that's not just down to his striking appearance. With his hair knotted on his head in the manner of an Indian sadhu, and his crimson-clothed form swathed in smoke from his trademark clove cigarettes, he is clearly a generation older than most of today's clubbers. But Cheb i Sabbah brings a radically new mix to the city's dancefloors. He has lived in San Francisco since the mid 80s, where he has spun weekly sets melding World Music and electro-beats, and organised concerts for Khaled, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and other global luminaries. During the past four years, meanwhile, he has also found the time to produce three albums that define his open-ended take on trance music.

The latest, *Krishna Lila* (Six Degrees), collects devotional songs or bhajans sung in praise of the Indian deity Krishna, framing them within a mesh of loops, beats and basslines. The album is divided into two suites, each reflecting the classical canons of both the North (Hindustani) and the South (Carnatic). Sabbah, an Algerian emigré of Jewish and Berber extraction, has long mined the liturgical music of the Indian and Arab diaspora for musical inspiration. His 1999 debut, *Shri Durga*, captures the mellifluous wail of Ustad Sultan Khan's bowed sarangi, and the final performances of khyal singer Ustad Salamat Ali Khan inside electronic dance rhythms, in a grid of electronic dance rhythms. Its successor, *Maha Maya*, comprises several tracks from the first album reimagined by contemporary producers. Yet the set's most atmospheric remixes were crafted by Sabbah himself.

Sabbah chose the bhajans recorded for *Krishna Lila* from each of India's classical traditions: the spare, Hindustani raga melodies of *The North* and the Carnatic forms accompanying dance in *The South*. It's his special knack to make these ancient songs accessible and relevant in club culture. The medieval poet-saint Mirabai wrote "Lagi Lagan", which opens *The North*, its lyrics pivoting on the thought that *"The entire world seems false like an illusion or a dream"*. Though sung in Hindi, it makes perfect sense wafting through a dancefloor environment, especially when framed by Bill Laswell's seismic bass and the chimerical shadings of digital reverb and other sonic treatments provided by New Delhi's electro-futurist duo, the MIDIval PunditZ.

Krishna Lila was made over two years of recording sessions in both India and the US. The Indian session players include K Shivakumar's violin and his sarod playing brother K Sridhar. The latter's family ties attracted talent to the album's Bombay and Madras sessions. "Sridhar was my guru on this project," Sabbah confesses. "[Indian musicians] don't really know what to make of me. Then they listen to *Shri Durga* and figure that I'm all right. But finally, it comes down to 'If he's with Sridhar, he must be a good guy'."

As a Parisian DJ in the 60s, Cheb i Sabbah learned of non-European music from the ethnographic material released by French and German labels. Later, in America, encountered the avant garde thespians of The Living Theater, whose leaders Julian Beck and Judith Malina invited him to join. Sabbah recalls Jim Morrison coming to see *Paradise Now* in Berkeley. "He was really high, of course," he remembers, "and got into a raging, screaming fight with one of the actors. Then they ended up kissing and hugging."

Prior to his current brace of solo releases, Sabbah created *The Majoon Traveler* in 1996 for the Belgian label Sub Rosa, applying William S Burroughs's cut-up techniques to music created by Cheb i Sabbah's collaborators Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry. The latter was a neighbour in San Francisco when Sabbah was living in the Haight with another radical theatre group, The Angels Of Light. Explaining his peripatetic lifestyle, Sabbah fondly recalls words from Don Cherry's business card: "Have music, will travel."

Asked if *Krishna Lila* is the final instalment in a trilogy, Cheb i Sabbah laughs. "What, like *Star Wars*?" Citing a more appropriate threesome from Indian cosmology – the gods Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu – he concedes, "OK, let's call it a trilogy. But there's no reason that I couldn't begin another trilogy involving Indian music." The next DJ Cheb i Sabbah album, already in the works, explores the Magreb countries of North Africa. "It will be focused solely on women singers, sacred and profane," he says. "I've already produced a couple of songs for it, and have slated sessions next spring in Morocco and Paris. I've been able to access recordings of very beautiful performances by Tuareg musicians [nomadic tribesmen of the Sahara]."

There appears to be no shortage of opportunities for DJ Cheb i Sabbah. The possibility of his working with those trance-inducing ambassadors of Moroccan music, Bachir Attar and the Master Musicians Of Joujouka, has been mooted. He has also been approached to produce a two disc set on behalf of the Ahimsa project, a response to the anti-Arab violence that followed in the wake of the 11 September attacks. And there is his ongoing tenure behind the turntables at the Haight street club Nickie's. "I see my albums as an offering," Cheb i Sabbah allows. "I don't play my own stuff too much, though I do get requests here and there. If they inspire a sense of devotion – the state known as bhakti – that's enough for me. You can achieve bhakti on the dancefloor .. oh, yes." ❑

Krishna Lila *is out now on Six Degrees*

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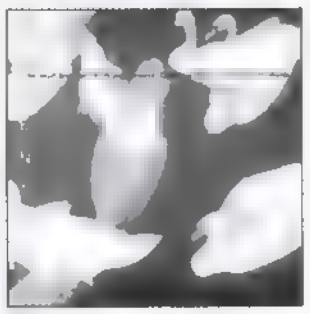
Eight solo saxophone pieces performed on alto tenor and baritone saxophones Although the pieces have been improvised they eventually shape themselves into some kind of structures Thierry Maucci has a big, warm sound which flows with tremendous ease Feelings and emotions are very important for his music. Notes by Thierry Maucci, front cover painting by another saxophone player, Ivo Perelman

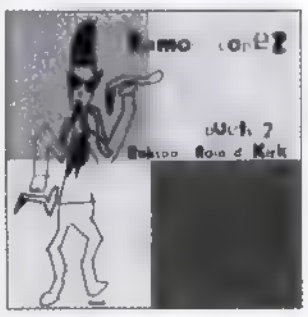
CD LR 354 **PAGO LIBRE**

This CD is a re-issue It was originally released by German Bellaphone in 1995 and since the demise of that label it has been unavailable Pago Libre is a super group Arkady Shilkloper - horn, Daniele Patumi - bass, Tscho Theissing - violin, John Wolf Brennan - piano, melodica. There are 12 pieces on the CD with each member of the quartet contributing a couple of compositions. Notes by Alex Kan.



CD LR 355 **MOMENTUM 3**

Momentum (CD LR 274) and Momentum 2 (CD LR 296) received tremendous critical acclaim Momentum 3 continues to explore the same aesthetics, but the line up of the group is different again John Wolf Brennan - piano, Bertrand Denzler - tenor saxophone, Christian Weber - bass and Christian Wolfarth - drums. Nowadays it is very difficult to come up with something new in the improvised music, but Momentum 3 does exactly that.



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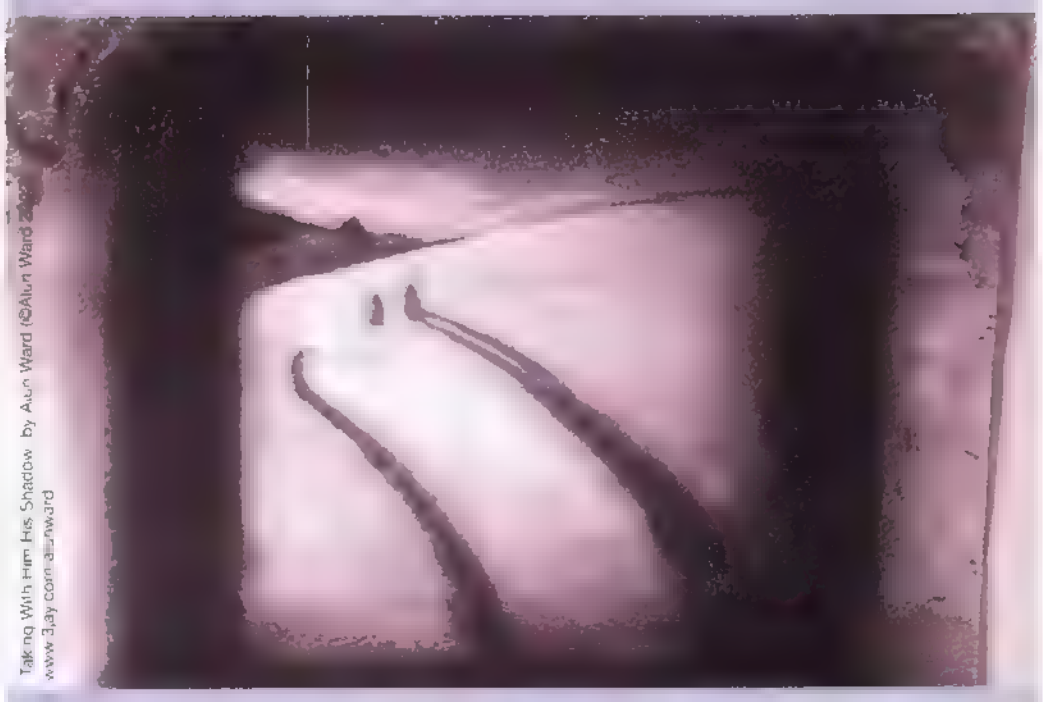

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RJD2

For whom the bell tolls. By Philip Sherburne

When you first play RJD2's recent single, "Let The Good Times Roll", you'll most likely wonder if the record isn't really some long buried soul gem recently unearthed from the vaults, rather than the intensively edited output of a 26 year old HipHop producer from Columbus, Ohio. It could even be the work of a group like Poets Of Rhythm, those contemporary tricksters whose R&B simulations pull the wool over the ears of the most attuned collectors of funk 45s. Just listen to the RJD2 take's tube-amped guitars, muffled bassline, and the "death comes a-knockin'" of drums seemingly recorded two rooms down from the rest of the group. Halfway through, of course, a hail of scratching pummels the song's vintage veneer, and an uncouth drum machine rudely interrupts its seamlessness. You're left with the same troubling thought RJD2's label boss El-P articulated (via anime legend Vampire Hunter D) five years ago: *"I was once told of a mutant who could twist time around him, and now it seems that I've met him."*

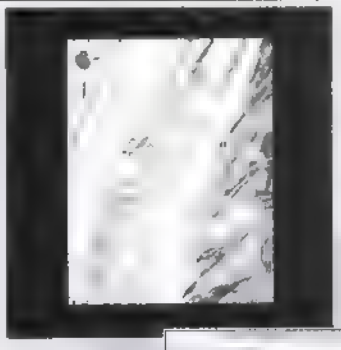
Laughter comes back over the wire from Columbus, where RJ, as his friends call him, has touched down from a tour supporting DJ Shadow. He is clearly delighted to hear that his ruse succeeded, even for half a track. Asked how he puts a song together, he comments, "I try to pick records from a similar era. There was a period when people would do sample based things that were really kitschy, like a Chuck D a cappella over Herb Alpert, and the kitschiness of it was like, 'Oh look, it's this sampled thing from 93 mixed with this sampled thing from 1965'. Like, 'These two people would never be in the same room, isn't it funny?' So I actually took the exact opposite approach. On "Let The Good Times Roll Part 2", I tried to take as much as I could from a particular era of soul music, with the intent of building a band, or the elements of a band, out of a very short era."

Deadringer, RJ's debut album for El-P's Definitive Jux label, isn't always so slyly constructed, but it never lacks density or soul, regardless of the source. His songs lean heavily on well warmed guitars, blocky piano chords, brazen horn lines and the leftovers from many a downhome folk session. "I've always liked that full, sick sound of rock records, like Blue Cheer," he declares. "Those early 70s records sound so warm, so big – sonically, that's how I'd like my shit to sound." For a white kid in Columbus, an education in classic rock is practically compulsory, but RJ came up through the HipHop battle circuit in the mid 90s, DJing for Columbus's MHz (MegaHertz) and then producing two of the group's singles for Bobbito Garcia's Fondle 'Em label, before slinging beats on Copywrite's "Holier Than Thou" for Rawkus. Nevertheless, the signifiers of classic HipHop are almost entirely absent from his own tunefully overdriven mash-ups.

But even when he's simply underpinning a guest vocalist – *Deadringer* features his citymates Blueprint, Copywrite and Jakki – RJ keeps his compositions much more complex than those of most beatmakers. "I get bored easily," he admits. "I try to pack a lot into the songs and keep a lot going on. It comes back to this thing about most instrumental HipHop being a couple of breakdowns and two or three loops that won't even be in key with each other." That's an unacceptable faux pas for a jazz schooled musician like RJ, who continues, "I'm too steeped in song structure and traditional harmony – I've listened to way too much Stevie Wonder to pull some shit like that."

What with his penchant for longform sampling, cutting and pasting four or eight bar sequences, inevitably, perhaps, RJ's complex instrumental tracks invite comparisons to DJ Shadow – and RJ's none too happy about it. "I don't like being compared to anybody. No artist wants to hear that type of stuff," he snaps, before conceding, "He's one of the few worth listening to. I'm just leery of getting stuck."

With his battle-tested temper, however, getting stuck is an unlikely option. RJ's upbringing in Columbus fostered a healthy competitive streak – something he thinks is missing from much of today's independent HipHop. In the mid-90s, he says, "The scene was vibrant, and it was exciting, and it was fresh, and there was a sense of competition. The only way you got respect was if you earned it, and before you earned it, you were a crumb, you were nobody. And it was a good situation." As the scene developed, he continues, flyer-toting backpackers overran the streetcorner battlers. "That sense of competition and earned respect left," laments RJ, concluding, "It was more like you did your job, and you tried hard, it's good enough. And everybody's patting each other on the back. Which is nice in theory, but this is fuckin' art." – *Deadringer is out now on Definitive Jux*



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No matter how radical or rude the music, there's usually a natural decorum to the classical concert experience. Challenging your audience is acceptable, but upsetting them or even questioning their reasons for being there is frowned upon. But during a portrait concert of Calcutta-born composer Clarence Barlow's music at the Hoxton New Music Days last year, such pretence was put aside. Cellist Anton Lukoszevieze left the stage after playing and reciting Barlow's morbidly amusing musical recipes *Fruitti D'Amore* (containing everything you need to know about Terrine of Mouse Brain and Tortured Duck), and the audience were left to ponder the synthesized sound of a piano and orchestra playing the sort of trite ear candy normally heard when you've been placed on hold by your local utility company. This was Barlow's *Piano Concerto*.

The crushingly banal music played on, its effect intensifying as laughter gave way to awkward murmurs. The neat chord progressions and cod classical orchestration eventually go wrong and the effect of the piece is almost as shocking as Edgard Varese's introduction of a siren into his early 20s piece *Hyperprism*. Such trivia apparently has no place in the concert hall, as it contaminates its cosy assurances.

Barlow claims his delight in playing havoc with the rules partly comes from his rebellion against the "11 long years" he spent in an Irish Catholic school as a colonial living in Calcutta. 'I have a piece which is a lecture about New Music written as a paraphrase of the Catholic Cataclysm," he relates. "It's in a strange sort of Adorno-like German and also brings in Milton Babbitt. It's therefore about suppression and how to have fun with rules.' Its title – *Farting Quietly In Church* – is a typically mischievous gambit that mixes naughty schoolboy humour with linguistic flair to make a profound point. Barlow describes how he 'compensated' for those school years with his own intense study of music, mathematics, astronomy and cosmology. He enrolled as a piano student in London in the early 1960s, moved to Cologne in 1968, where he studied with Bernd Alois Zimmermann and Stockhausen, and began to issue his challenges against the New Music establishment.

Barlow's works can be at once rigorous and whimsical, not to mention beautiful. His masterpiece is *Coglutotobusisiretmesi*, which exists both as a solo piano work and in an electronic realisation, and spins a new sort of dense counterpoint from the computer algorithmic control of tonality and rhythm. He describes it as an example of 'parametric' music, and *Farting Quietly In Church* as 'commemorative' music. So what exactly is his *Piano Concerto*?

"As a middle aged man I realise I can do anything I like," he declares. "I started the *Piano Concerto* as a 15 year old and when I decided to finish it in 1998, I carried on as I am now. There are four sorts of time in the piece. In biographical time, you see the work of a teenager unaware of the anachronistic language he's using. It was collated and orchestrated by my 29 year old self with the expertise I couldn't have brought to it in my teens. And only now am I mature enough not to be embarrassed by it.

"The section I added a few years ago sounds more contemporary than usual Barlow," he continues, "and that's historical time. It starts around 1800, like Bellini, before moving on to Rachmaninov and then becoming 'up to date'. There's an enormous accelerando which is 'physical time', but the most important is psychological time. The first four minutes of the piece are totally boring and it increasingly gets slightly better until the most recent section is actually rather impressive. I like the fact that the beginning will annoy so called 'modernists' and that my new section will perturb lovers of 19th century music.'

Barlow's unpicking of our obsession with musical style and his purposeful manipulation of intuitive musical responses constitute parody raised to the level of a virtuosic art form. His eyes light up as he admits to the great pleasure he gets from annoying narrow-minded audiences and those composers whose music he finds somehow contrived or dishonest. Barlow has recently incurred the mighty wrath of Karlheinz Stockhausen himself.

"Stockhausen objected to my *Fantasia Quasi Una Sonata (Con 'Mantra' Di Stockhausen)*, which he claims is an unauthorised version of his piece,' enthuses Barlow. 'It starts like a grand 19th century piano sonata and then rewrites sections from his *Mantra*. Stockhausen heard the piece and I then had a letter from the German royalties association telling me that they could no longer recognise the piece as my own.

"Stockhausen's a dreadful megalomaniac who writes puerile music," he contends. "This is a shame, because he is a good musician and can be very charming. In the 50s he was protected by ingenuity, but then mistakenly imposed his own taste. Today he's mad about money and espousing his own cult. I'll try and annoy him even more when I've got time."

Fantasia Quasi Una Sonata is the centrepiece of a recent hatArt CD, *Musica Derivata*, which also includes *Variazioni E Un Pianoforte Meccanico* – in which a pianist duets with a player piano – and the two piano trios *1981* and *'Spright The Diner' By Nib Wryter*. As the CD title suggests, each piece is a treatment of found musical objects and *Variazioni E Un Pianoforte Meccanico* starts with the pianist playing Beethoven's Piano Sonata opus 111 as the great man intended. Then the player piano chips in and overwhelms him, leaving the pianist with no option but to leave the stage. The piece was composed on Barlow's Autobusk program, on which he sets the parameters for generating material.

"I think the word 'composer' is misunderstood,' he challenges. "It literally means 'one who puts together', and that's exactly what I do. Each instrument in *1981* has its own material, taken from existing trios by Clementi, Schumann and Ravel, and the piece exists both as a diagram showing how these different materials spiral around one another and in its musical form. *1981* doesn't contain a single note of my own and yet I definitely composed the piece.

"The 'avant garde' – or whatever else you want to call it – is involved with reshaping musical language. Yet it's become a tradition in which composers write what they believe to be correct, and their reference points are exceedingly narrow. My music is not in an avant garde tradition and therefore by definition should be avant garde. It's certainly not postmodern," he concludes. 'Postmodernists are reactionaries and have no place in creative art." Musica Derivata *is on hat(now)ART. . .until... is released on Los Angeles River Records*

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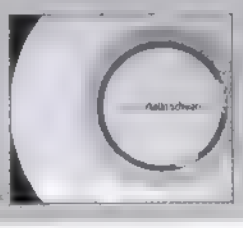

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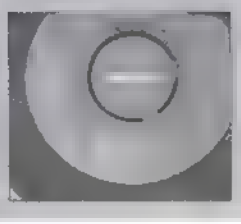

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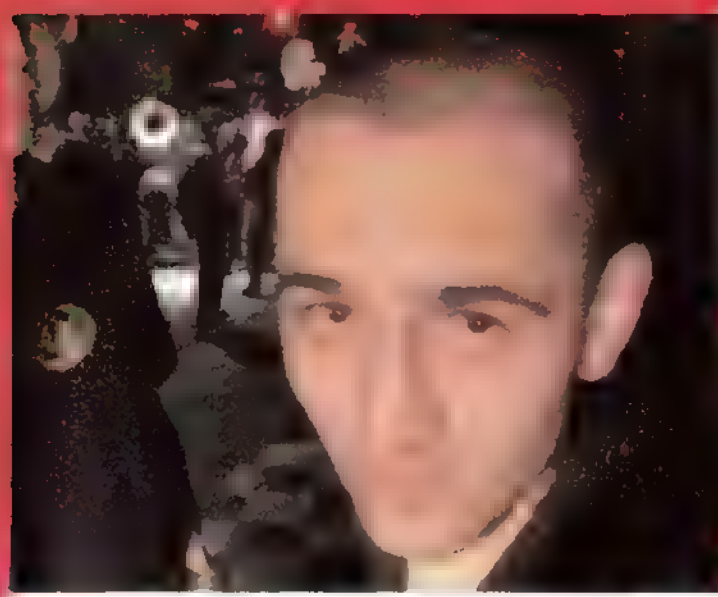
Global Ear: Izhevsk

A survey of sounds from around the planet. This month: Don Watson travels deep inside Russia's Volga Basin to eavesdrop on the region's new electronica scene



Volga factions: the Morzefish collective's Anton Yantsen (left), plus scenes from Izhevsk's Kalazhnikov electro underground

At Moscow's international airport, a billboard advertising an alcoholic drink gently mocks the image of the city held by the thousands of Western tourists who pass through it. "Standard Russian", reads the caption over a traditional carved wooden doll – the type sold by the truckload from the state department store on Red Square. The billboard's reverse side, meanwhile, depicts a sophisticated, designer clad, international jetsetting woman, sipping from a long slim glass. Its caption echoes: 'Russian Standard"

The message is clear enough. The days of Moscow as a holiday in other people's early capitalism are over. Along with St Petersburg, the city has made it onto the circuit of cosmopolitan modernity. And the Mafia brats with their micro-mobile phones, returning home laden with Bond Street carrier bags, reinforce that message.

Traces of Soviet times might remain embedded in the brash and sometimes surreal surface of contemporary Moscow but, like archaeological remnants, they only serve to emphasise the pace of change that the city has undergone during the last decade. In a club like Propoganda, which pioneered House music in Moscow back in the wild frontier days of the early 90s, you might just as well be in London or Chicago. But the moment you enter the smaller Moscow airport used for domestic flights, the point hits home. Despite its concession stands, the stark neon and grimy green paint reveal that the veneer of Westernisation runs pretty thin. And by the time you get to Ulyanovsk, a small town inside the Volga Basin hosting the Farvater festival of electronic music, it is like stepping back into the Soviet days. The 50s style mannequin in the bridal gown poster, one of the few to adorn its bleak main street, could be mocking her counterpart at the international airport.

There are signs of change, but they are much harder to find. On a street where women in heavy overcoats and headscarves sell tin trinkets and shapeless garments from grey tarpaulins spread out across the pavement, a branch of the Moscow shop Camelot has opened, selling ironic leopardskin tops and bright red platform trainers.

The audience for electronic music, meanwhile, is small but growing, and networks are starting to form among groups of enthusiasts in Ulyanovsk and other Volga cities like Izhevsk, which is the home of a particularly prolific electronic scene. Being small, it is also eclectic. Jon Shaw and Alun Harrison, of South London label Ultravinyl, have been brought out to the Festival by the British Council to run a seminar on the business side of establishing a club culture. They are impressed by the freshness and energy they find here. "It reminds me of the early days of the rave scene in London," Shaw says. But they are a little nonplussed by the way Trance, House and drum 'n' bass – all such distinct forms in the UK – can cross-pollinate in Russia with post rock, the avant garde and folk music, even.

With Alexander Youminov, Anton Yantsen is the founder of Morzefish, a collective project which embraces a record label called Kama. Picking up a copy of a Trio Bulgarka CD by chance in his local grocery store, he was inspired to record some of the ritual musics of the Udmurt Republic's Old Believers, an Amish-like sect based near Izhevsk. The results are showcased on three CDs, some of which have been sampled and fed into the dance music mix of Izhevsk group Virgo Intacta.

Youminov is something of a veteran of the Izhevsk music scene. Initially a drummer in the region's only punk group, he was transformed by a sortie he made to a Moscow black market vinyl dealer in the 80s. Eager to keep back his stock of Depeche Mode records for a more wealthy market, the dealer sold Youminov a collection of what he rated as somewhat less marketable discs. Including records by Cabaret Voltaire and Kraftwerk, Youminov's buys became the basis of what is now a burgeoning electronic scene.

In the early days of glasnost, Youminov became Izhevsk's first DJ. But to take up the position, first he had to register with the state, a requirement demanded of all employees of the city's lone nightclub. Since the state did not recognise the post of DJ, however, Youminov was officially designated the cleaner of the club.

Glasnost or not, the KGB was never too far away in those days. Anton Yantsen in particular was closely monitored, partly because his father was a munitions specialist. "I never knew this at the time," he says, "I just used to know he went off on trips to places like Iran and Libya." His father, Anton later discovered, was accompanying deliveries of Russian missiles.

Even in these post-Glasnost times, the KGB like to keep an eye on Western influences. As we are waiting for a taxi to leave Ulyanosk, two urbane but conservative looking figures engage us in conversation. Speaking immaculate English, they offer to drive us to the station. "You just had your first encounter with the KGB," remarks Yantsen, as he skilfully extricates us and directs us into a cab.

A Kama compilation of Izhevsk acts entitled *Kalazhnikov Electro* – after machine gun manufacturer Mikhail Kalazhnikov, the city's most famous resident – is a good guide to the this isolated city's resourceful and inventive electronic underground. In an inversion of the usual state of play in Western dance-orientated music these past few years, the collection is stronger on ideas than it is on production values. An outfit like Birdwood, for instance, create a hypnotic tableau from a range of fascinating noises sailing across the soundfield. It makes you wonder what they might have achieved, if they made it in a Western studio.

The most strikingly original contribution comes from Gattaca, whose plaintive melodies have been fed into a multilayered electronic mixer by the omnipresent Youminov. The mix opens unexpectedly lush sound panoramas in their sometimes stark and minimal piece. Virgo Intacta are no less innovative. Their contribution opens with looped, bell like theme that's rich in enough in itself to satisfy the needs of your average Western producer. But for Virgo Intacta, it sets up a complex interlocking whole, featuring stabbing bass counterpoint, and a sampled 'old believer' chant.

The mood of Izhevsk's nascent scene recalls the trench camaraderie of the early days of rave. "Clubbers are very much apart from the mainstream of culture," says local journalist Olga Sazhina, who is working with Yantsen and Youminov on the second Morzefish Underwater Izhevsk festival of electronica. The city's clubs, she continues, are dominated by the 'gopniki', troglodytes who have to be negotiated with extreme care, especially when drunk (which is often). At present, the scene revolves around parties and concerts involving various Morzefish units. They fill the gaps in-between, during the summer at least, with outings to the Bog, an area of heathland close to Mr Kalazhnikov's house.

The juxtaposition somehow feels right: displaced by the new Russian standards set by Izhevsk's electronica youth, the old man who invented one of the world's deadliest and most successful 'brands' can be seen pottering in his modest garden, now he's been put out to grass. *For information on the Morzefish project, go to www.morzefish.udm.ru*

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Charlemagne Palestine

Tested by Louise Gray. Photos by Eva Vermandel

Charlemagne Palestine was born into a Russian Jewish family in Brooklyn in 1947. From an early age he trained as a cantorial singer in the synagogues of New York. At 11, he spent a year playing conga for Tiny Tim in Manhattan's clubs. Later, he began ringing the carillon at St Thomas's Episcopal Church, which was particularly responsive to the sonic overtones of drones and repetitions.

Palestine was drawn into the 1960s New York art scene, and soon came in contact with Tony Conrad, who was his conduit to Andy Warhol's and La Monte Young's groups. He also worked with Indian classical singer Pandit Pran Nath. After graduating from the NYC High School of Music and Art, he researched synthesizer composition at NYU's Intermedia Centre. When its director, Morton Subotnick, moved to the California Institute for the Arts (Cal Arts), he took the fledgling composer with him. There, Palestine encountered the Bösendorfer piano, whose harmonic spectrum provided him with the sonic clarity he needed. While at Cal Arts, he built a drone machine to pursue lines begun with his earlier four hour organ work, *Spectral Continuum Drones*. Though he was associated with the rising minimalist scene, some of his early trance and sonority works, performed on the run through galleries while smashing his body against walls, also linked him to the performance art of Hermann Nitsch, Chris Burden and Vito Acconci. By the late 1970s, he had to anaesthetise himself with Cognac and clove cigarettes to play his more physical works, where he had to beat a piano until his hands were bloodied. Such demands made him temporarily give up performance for sculpture and visual art.

During this 'silence', he amassed a huge collection of toy animals, for which he developed the concept of 'Charleworld' as a spiritual dimension informed by Western animism. Meanwhile, occasional concerts and CD reissues such as *Alloy (Golden 1)* (Alga Marghen), *Strumming Music* (Barooni) and *Schlingen-Blängen* (New World) have led to his rediscovery by a younger generation. His latest release is *Music For Big Ears* (Staalplaat).

This autumn, Italian label Alga Marghen will release a set documenting Palestine's late 1960s Buchla period. The same season, he has a multimedia work scheduled for the Atomium in Brussels; and the École des Beaux Arts Valenciennes will publish a book of photographs and essays commemorating his sound and visual art.

The Jukebox took place on the terrace of Palestine's Brussels home, where he lives with his wife, two Bösendorfers and his enormous collection of fluffy animals and cowboy hats.

MORTON SUBOTNICK
"TOUCH"
FROM *THE ELECTRONIC WORKS I* (MODE) 1969

This is very complicated electronic music. This is from the 1960s.. tape-manipulated music.

You're on the right track.

We used to cut tape into thousands of little pieces. To make something stop or start, we used to have to splice the tapes at different angles. It was spaghetti music. I used to make spaghetti music, too, before the synthesizer. But I'm not sure whose it is. It could be Pierre Henry. No, it's one of the Americans. It could be an early Morton Subotnick piece because it's so accessible.

You've got it. It's a four-track tape piece from 1969.

He brought electronic music a new attraction. He actually did one of the first popular synthesizer pieces [*Silver Apples Of The Moon*], so this could have been made on a synth, though if this is 1969, he made it in the studio where I worked. All my 1969-70 pieces are made on a Buchla synthesizer. Donald Buchla was an electronic synthesizer designer from Oakland, California and he built the famous synthesizer. I did all my electronic music up to 1973 on versions of his machines. In fact, I met him when he was working with Morton on *Touch*.

Tell me how you met Subotnick. You were one of the students he wanted to take with him to Cal Arts.

Student isn't quite the right word. In New York there was a multimedia studio, Intermedia. It was open. If you were interested in working in electronic music you could come and work there. Mort had been the founder and brought this Buchla synth there. Ingram Marshall was there, Rhys Chatham, who was very young, maybe 15, was there, and there was also this Buchla prototype that Don had given Mort. You would learn how to use it and then teach other people. It took up a whole wall, maybe three metres long by a metre and half high. It had lots of dials... they still make them, and there's a resurgence of interest in the analogue synths. In fact, I was looking to buy one. I have an Oberheim Expander that I've just sent for from the US, and a Matrix 12. They were the last generations of the Buchla and Moog technology. On the other side of the room there were two or three Ampex tape recorders. I used to work in the middle of the night and all my *Holy I*, *Holy II* – there's a whole series – that was all done on the same machine on which Mort did *Touch*.

Do you keep up with what's happening currently in electronic music?

Yeah. People send me things. I listen. I worked with Pan Sonic for a *Mort Aux Vaches*/Staalplaat CD [1999], and they use an analogue system. I like the analogue sound. That's what drew us together. They heard one of the sonorities I made with the ARP and Serge [Tcherepnin] synths. Serge was a student of Buchla, in the sense of learning synth technology, in the 1970s. He started to make inexpensive, do-it-yourself kits, because the problem with so much of this music was, as it was unsellable except for people like Mort and a few others, you either had to be in a university or make your own machine.

THE THEATRE OF ETERNAL MUSIC
"B FLAT DORIAN BLUES"
FROM *THE THEATRE OF ETERNAL MUSIC* (BOOTLEG) 1963

I like it. Indian influences, though it's not Indian. La Monte Young? How long does it last?

Now there's a question. It's a bootleg from one of Young's unreleased tapes, featuring all the usual suspects: Tony Conrad, John Cale, Terry Jennings, Angus Maclise on bongos.

I remember those days. You could go to an evening raga that started at 10pm and went on till 6am in the late 1960s at the New York Town Hall. When I visited India, you could go to concerts that went on all night, so this kind of durational music wasn't really invented by 'us'. OK, I had pieces that went on for five hours or three days – La Monte's were far longer – but these ideas came from ethnic musics.

How much did you work with these New York guys?

Not at all. The only one was Terry Jennings, but this was already in the early 1970s, and Conrad in the late 1960s. I was from another generation and my way of arriving at modal, long music had another road. This is very nice and I would like to steal it, please. It's very much between shehnai and soprano saxophone and you get the feeling of where *A Rainbow In Curved Air* would later go. Of course, Terry Riley was also a soprano saxophonist. But that was much later.

By the mid-1970s when minimalism was being picked up by a larger audience, you're on record as being quite cynical. Did you feel it was a sell-out?

Hmm, I can't really say. Something happened that certainly I felt excluded from. I wouldn't call it selling out, because that's where music was going. For example, John Adams, who was helping me, gave me two commissions, and two years later he was the darling of American minimal music. It was going in that direction. Maybe we could say someone we don't talk about in the history of minimalism is [film composer] John Williams. *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind* are all very melodic, modal, not minimal, but there are big orchestral themes on repeated patterns. And suddenly the whole world is humming it in the subways. There was a whole phenomenon happening. When you're in it, it can hit you personally. There were times I was pissed off. But looking back at the history, this was where it was going, and now even as I've returned, I really have a different approach. This is closer to my music than what would happen later with the rhythm music of Steve Reich and Philip Glass, for example. For me, rhythm is an internal and not an external aspect. But this is beautiful. There is somewhere a tape of the work Terry Jennings and I did shortly before he died. I've been trying to find it. Oh, that was fun. Terry plays very much like John Coltrane.

KRAFTWERK
"TRANS-EUROPA EXPRESS"
FROM *TRANS-EUROPA EXPRESS* EMI 1977

I remember this, but I can't tell you who composed it. I've heard this in bars, on TV, on the street a thousand times. It's German, that famous group from the 1970s.

Kraftwerk. There was a time when you'd find them on modern classical bills with people like Philip Glass.

Oh, that's right. What became of them?

They still technically exist. This is from 1977. It's possibly one of the most quoted tracks of all time.

Everyone knows this. It's like wallpaper, meaning that I've heard it everywhere. It's that accessible. When something becomes public domain, there's a wallpaperness about it. That's not a bad thing. Andy Warhol was into wallpaperness and that's how modern music sound can be everywhere at a certain moment.

The minimalists and your early works were interested in inducing trance states in the performer, audience or both. Do you have any views on how Western trance music has developed in the last 30 years?

Not really, but it's really funny to see how these guys are dressed. These very formal suits, it shows it comes from a certain intellectual ideas and these guys are not tribal guys. They're intellectuals out of German universities creating a sound form.

It's interesting how Western culture took trance

music from tribal forms. What happened was that the 'white man', if we could say that, took these ideas and all of a sudden it was a new form that they had created. I was always against that idea. I've done some nice sounds, but I can't say that I created the forms. There was all this fighting about who created this kind of music. Did La Monte Young create it? Well, if he created the refrigerator, maybe, if he invented the electric motor... He [did] help put them into Western consciousness. If you were going to India for the last four or five thousand years, you could have heard the Young piece, but putting it in a 'white man's' context for intellectuals, and make them understand it, that kind of framing of this experience was done in the last 30 or 40 years by a certain group of people. But I don't think that's a discovery. I think it's a rediscovery and another way of packaging this phenomenon that has existed for thousands of years.

But wallpaper is not a bad idea for music [laughs]. I do long pieces that are three dimensional – it's kind of like a screen that exists. It's there. When you go into one of Warhol's cow wallpaper rooms you're surrounded. Just like this, in a way.

JON HASSELL
"DARBARI EXTENSION"
FROM *AKA-DARBARI-JAVA* (ECM 1983)

[Listens a few minutes] I don't know who did it, but I like it. It's a really nice mix between electronics and a kind of ethnic, chant-like continuation of a singing cycle, only it's done by electronics. It's very nice.

It's Jon Hassell, from the early 1980s. It's partly based on a raag by Pandit Pran Nath, with whom you both studied.

I knew Jon a little when we both lived in California. We used to meet up from time to time, but I haven't seen him in a thousand million years. I don't know this. Is it a... trumpet? Yes, he used to be a trumpeter. He used to do great things electrifying trumpets.

Here, Hassell uses a computer to create a trumpet chorus to trace the themes of the raag, "Darbari", over Senegalese drumming. There are also some Aka pygmy voices from the Central African rainforest.

It has a very beautiful sound. The phrasing of this electronic sound [he sings what is a very difficult motif] really sounds like a tribal phrasing.

Tell me about your studies with Pran Nath.

Well, in fact what happened was that I was very early. I was one of his first students in America, but that was by chance. It was around 1968, and I was living on the Upper West Side [in New York City] on 86th Street. On Pran Nath's first visit to New York, he was invited by Dr Richard Alpert, who later became Ram Dass. One of my neighbours, who was a disciple of Ram Dass, wanted me to hear this guy singing. I was very impressed and it turned out that Pran Nath was living about six blocks from me. I went to sing with him and by the second day, people thought I was him – I'd been singing cantorial music since I was a child and this was real easy for me. Pran Nath wanted me to become his disciple and I was at the age – I was just 20, at least ten years younger than La Monte Young and Terry Riley – and had already come from what I thought was an over-disciplined matriarch with my mother and I was trying to avoid replicating this. I was already studying with a vocal teacher, Sebastian Engleberg, who was also teaching operatic singer Frederica Von Stadt, and he was a tyrant. Pran Nath was very nice, but he was another tyrant.

But we had a great period together. I sang for a few months. In the end, Terry Riley and La Monte Young would become his students and disciples. They would change their lives to work with him for more than 20 years. But that period was very strong, him and I. But easily within one day, I was singing like Pran Nath. Not in the complexity, of course – that takes a lifetime – but in the sound and the timbre. I was the closest, probably, to his sound. Immediately. It was just something that came from my traditions. He was a great guy. I enjoyed him more as a whisky drinking womaniser, especially as I was a bad boy myself.

TERRY RILEY
"MUSIC FOR THE GIFT"
FROM *THE GIFT* (ORGAN OF CORTI) 2000

You've mentioned this artist a few times, although this isn't the sound you normally associate with him.

I don't know who the trumpet player is, but those repeats in the music suggest that the composer could be Terry Riley.

Yes, it's from 1963. The trumpeter is Chet Baker.

Oh, Baker was excellent. He was a magnificent musician. Unfortunately, I only saw him perform at the end of his life in Switzerland. He was living in Zurich. Totally wrung out like a dirty dishrag with alcohol and drugs. A sad story... but that's the problem with working in a form that's so ephemeral, and the life you lead – travelling, clubs, you're a bit gypsy. I'm amazed I'm here where I am, that my life is better now, that I've had a comeback. As you see I live nicely, and I drink a little, but not too much. I've saved myself. Several of my friends, like Terry [Jennings], didn't...

You had a period when you left music completely, didn't you?

It was a way to save myself. The animals saved me in a way. I was really on a suicide, kamikaze route. Although I didn't define it like that at the time, in retrospect I saw where I was going. Changing my whole style of life, giving up performance [was necessary]. Just to build one of my pieces took days and weeks of cutting wood and painting. It was like a therapy, like I made my own psychiatric hospital, with my animals all around me. On a level, it's cured me of this suicidal behaviour that a lot of artists fall into. I mean, alcohol and this ephemeral thing. You give it your all and then it just disappears after.

Does 'Charleworld' still exist?

It was something that was in passing. It was an idea in itself. I just used that word one day and all of a sudden it was in all these newspapers. The house you see is full of animals; The Blind Monkey is on the piano. I try to create a world. My parallel with La Monte, with Pran Nath, with gurus, indigenous musics and dance, is that in ancient traditions you don't do things in pieces. Music is related to sculpture, is related to dance, to eating and drinking, the seasons and the ceremonies of the week. That's what Charleworld is. It is the reconstruction, in my my adult infantalia, of a world that is integrated all together, and I am the king of that world. I am the emperor of Charleworld.

SUICIDE
"LAS VEGAS MAN"
FROM *SUICIDE* (BLAST FIRST) 1978

Makes me think of The Velvet Underground, how they began to use drones in a much more violent way. It has a Lou Reed feel, but it's not him, is it?

No, it's live in 1977 from CBGBs. The NYC band, Suicide. If we flip forward to "23 Minutes Over Brussels"...

In the 1970s, Brussels was a really adventurous place for new music. It was really exciting.

Maybe Suicide were too adventurous for Brussels. "23 Minutes..." is basically a recording of a riot that took place when they supported Elvis Costello there.

[Laughs] What were the audience rioting about? This is what can happen when you're the support act that no one wants to see. Around this time, near the end of one period of my career, I was doing very aggressive pieces and Glenn Branca, some of The Sex Pistols, Arto Lindsay, the Sonic Youth guys were coming to my concerts. This kind of violence was in the air and this is when I got scared because I began to be more and more in a very bad place, and at the end of concert, if you're not in a group, then you're alone. I needed to take a break. I was envisioning a new time that was on the cusp of coming. It wasn't going to be my time, though. That next generation had a much more violent way of expressing these blocks of sound. A violent trance.

DIAMANDA GALAS WITH JOHN PAUL JONES
"DARK END OF THE STREET"
FROM *THE SPORTING LIFE* (MUTE) 1994

I'm not really a historian of black music, but so much of this comes from gospel music, which I love to watch and hear. Some of the greatest black singers have learned their craft in church.

This James Carr song is by Chips Moman and Dan Penn. But the singer here is Diamanda Galas, who didn't come out of a gospel tradition.

But she is singing in that style. I don't know her background.

A real mixture: operatic, Greek Orthodox, classical piano, polyglottal works.

But for me this is a gospel tradition, though the phrasing is strange. The sounds at a certain moment wow, that's a big range she's got – it makes me think of Yma Sumac. She was one of the earliest who brought many traditions together in a singing style that went over four octaves. She was a great singer, certainly in the context of inventing herself as an Aztec queen when she came from Kansas or wherever. She's someone to be re-evaluated, so is Carmen Miranda. Both people, in the context of the times, chose an interesting way to present a radical personality.

HERMANN NITSCH
"MUSIK DER 66 AKTION, 21 MAY 1980"
FROM *MUSIK DER 66 AKTION, 21 MAY 1980* (ALGA MARGHEN) 1998

I know who this is. It starts with this drone, very much like some of my drones, and they were done in these rituals of violence. It's Hermann Nitsch. I've heard this CD before. Nitsch did a lot of drone music and several years ago, the Cortical Foundation in California brought out many of his recordings and they also did my *Schlongo!!! Daluvdrone*.

This is from Alga Marghen, an Italian label.

I know them. They've released some of my electronic music.

Did you see any of Nitsch's Orgy Mystery theatre?

I've seen about five. In the 1960s and 1970s, I was also a body artist, and we were often invited to the same festivals. I used to bang myself against walls and sing at the same time, and we were both considered part of the same movement along with the Vienna Actionists. I was part of the American group with Vito Acconci. At one of the FIAC art fairs in Paris in 1973, Hermann and I were invited to perform at the same opening. He did one of his performances with animal carcasses and music, and I did one for four organs and piano. There was a full page picture of Hermann's work and it was mistakenly captioned as being my work. I found it funny, but Nitsch was furious. A few days later there was a disclaimer in tiny writing on page 37, but he was still cross. From that time on, I've always asked him how my work is going... Now he has a sense of humour about it. Nitsch's organ music is ritualistic in that he isn't so interested in the subtlety of long tones, but often his works do sound like mine.

What do you think of Nitsch's concept of the

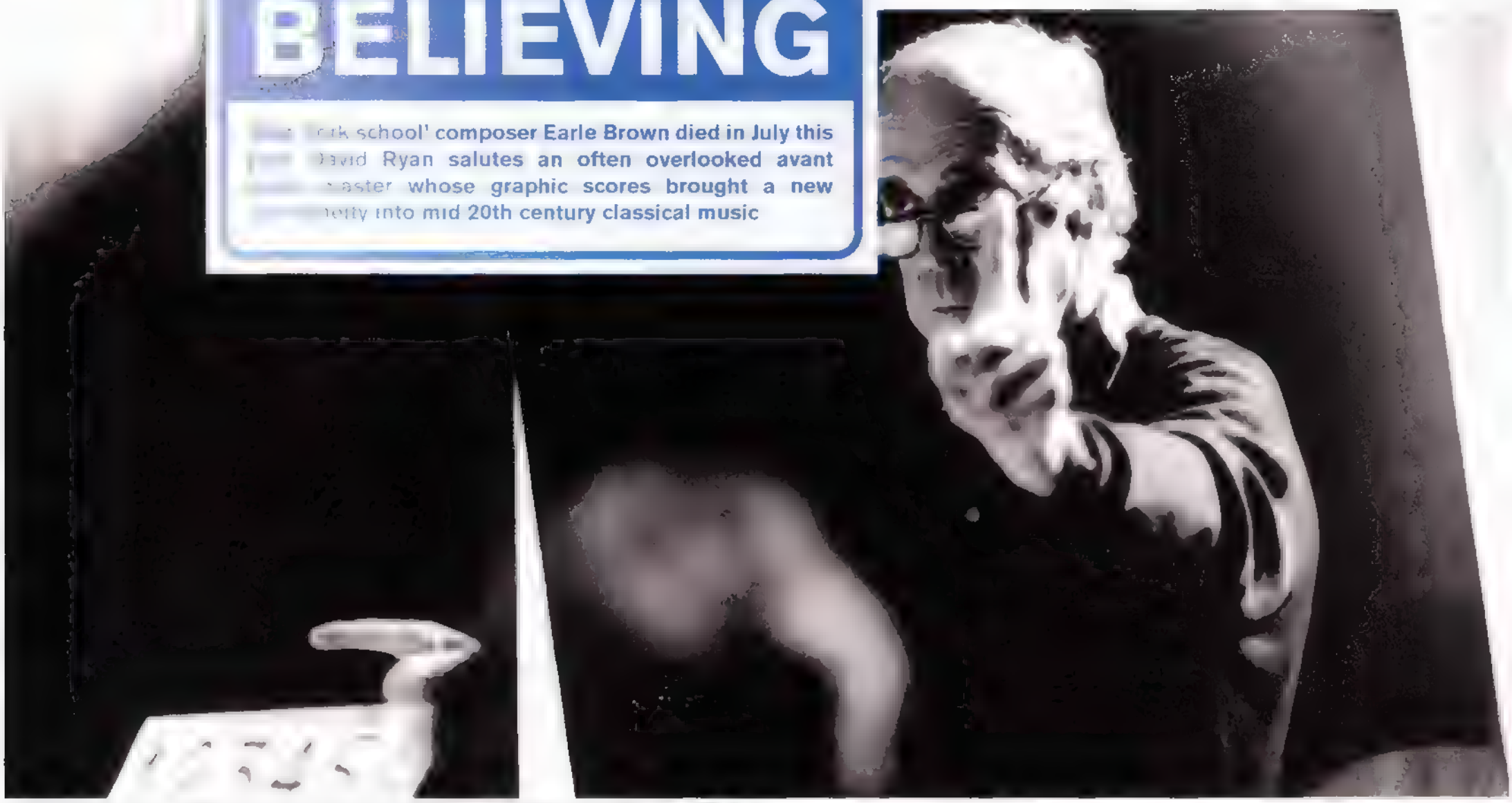
Dionysian ecstasy produced by music and ritual?
I've always been who I am, and I've done all these things that touch on sound and the body. I am more Dionysian than Apollonian, but Nitsch does have this need to think afterwards about what it all means. That's where we're different. I never had a credo for other people. I haven't created some kind of sect, like Hermann, or La Monte Young or Pran Nath. What I do comes out of a personal investigation and if I could say that I have another philosophy, it's that each person has to make his own way. It's not easy in ephemeral art to do something that's pure and not too commercial. What's good for Hermann is good for Hermann and what's good for Charlemagne is good for Charlemagne. I don't believe in sects.

RHYS CHATHAM
"GUITAR TRIO"
FROM *A RHYS CHATHAM COMPENDIUM* (TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS) 2002

In the early 1980s, there were the two guitar monsters that came out of New York, Rhys Chatham and Glenn Branca. The war of the guitar monsters! This is probably Chatham.
Yes, it's from 1977.
It's more peaceful somehow... I even knew his father. I've known Rhys since he was a teenager. He started so early. He was in the studio with Mort Subotnick. He was a flautist in those days. He used to do electronic pieces transforming the sound of the flute, which were very interesting. His early pieces were very severe, minimal pieces; I found them very hard to listen to: long drones, without many overtones. You were just stuck with a block of sound. They were very extreme. In those days, he was a Jehovah's Witness, then he gave that up and started to have sex and to drink. He says now he's gone back to playing the trumpet. He lives in Paris now. I already knew of him from about 1968, 1969. He was the founder of the music programme at the Kitchen in Manhattan.
Was it really a war between the guitar monsters, as you say?
Rhys says so. These things happen in New York. Like me and La Monte Young. Now I live in Europe. I really don't give a shit, but in a small town, in a hard town, you need to be on top. New York is a tough place, there aren't so many pleasures. It's expensive: very few people have trees in their backyard, like I do here, so your ego gets stuck on egotistic things. You want to be the king, so you really get into that mood. When I was in the States, I had to fight my animal sculptures with Mike Kelley and Jeff Koons, and my music with Young and Philip Glass. There are all these wars, and the journalists don't make things easier, because they put you all in one soup and so you're all competing for this one little taste. It just doesn't seem so important living over here. I just do what I do and I never really wanted to be a king. Warhol was a kinglike person, so was John Cage. They need that. Nam June Paik is like that, Bob Rauschenberg is like that. They need to feel that they're top of the top, and that people feel that they're top of the top. If I could just be considered as a nice little prince... A prince is OK, an ageing, salt and pepper prince, just so that I can do what I want. That'd be just great.

SEEING IS BELIEVING

[illegible] York school' composer Earle Brown died in July this [illegible] David Ryan salutes an often overlooked avant [illegible] master whose graphic scores brought a new [illegible] into mid 20th century classical music



GOING MOBILE: EARLE BROWN SCULPTING WHILE CONDUCTING AND WITH MORTON FELDMAN [illegible] CENTRE

PHOTOS: WONGE BERGMANN, CONDUCTING; EARLE BROWN MUSIC FOUNDATION (W. FELDMAN)

Earle Brown was associated with the composers John Cage, Morton Feldman, David Tudor and Christian Wolff, who together constituted the 'New York School'. Whether as composer or proselytiser, Brown played a crucial role within musical modernism, energetically embracing and disseminating new ideas. As artistic director of the Contemporary Sound Series at Time Mainstream Records from 1960-73, he oversaw many historic first recordings of experimental works by the most important protagonists of the American and European avant gardes, not to mention the pioneering improvising units Musica Elettronica Viva and AMM, and the experimental ensemble Sonic Arts Union. As a composer, his own work was especially influential in Europe, where his mobile scores (essentially graphic scores drafted as aural equivalents of Alexander Calder's mobiles), made their impact as early as 1954, when David Tudor introduced them at the Darmstadt Summer Course. Along with Cage's philosophical ideas, Brown's scores caused a powerful sea change from the serial domination of the 1950s Darmstadt school.

Discounting the numerous references in Cage's first collection of writings, *Silence*, my own first encounter with Brown's music was in fact visual rather than aural. Many examples of his scores were reproduced in various volumes devoted to notation, including Erhard Karkoschka's influential *Notation In New Music* (1972). I vividly remember the dynamism and impact of his *December 1952* (from *Folio*, 1952-53) and *Available Forms 1* (1961). The former was the first purely visual statement to be offered, without any detailed prescription or additional instruction, for direct translation into a sonic event; and the latter was an elastic, open-ended work consisting of material distributed on a page, to be shaped in peformance by the conductor. I was struck by the liveliness and fluidity of Brown's structures, and in particular the distinctive soundworlds he brought into being: from breathy whispers to monumental blocks, lush chordal sequences and intricate traceries of sound.

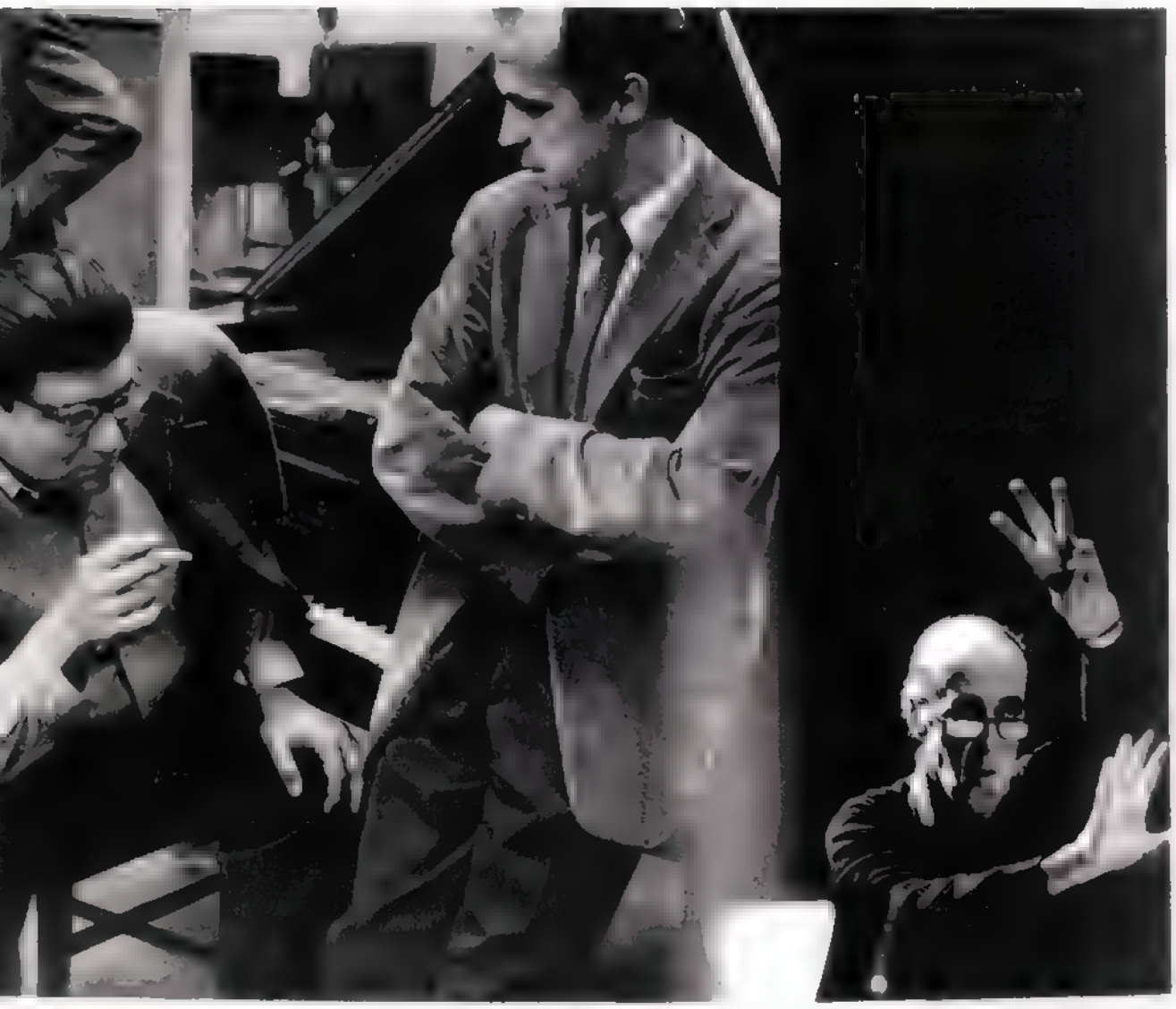
In 1995 while researching indeterminate music, I telephoned Brown at his home in New York State. 'C'mon over," he boomed with enthusiasm in his characteristically resonant voice. He was a gregarious, generous man, jovial and extremely helpful on all the occasions we met. After these meetings we planned an event in London. The result was Dal Niente 2, a concert at Islington's Union Chapel, featuring Brown's music and pieces by Feldman and Cage. With the composer conducting his own *Tracking Pierrot* and directing pieces from *Folio*, the performance was, for many in the audience, a revelation.

Unlike his New York School contemporaries, Brown's development does not divide up clearly into 'early' and 'late' periods. At first, he moved freely from highly determined, serial-like structures to graphic scores, and then developed a refined combination of both in his 'open form' pieces. His mature works (the later orchestral pieces, for example) often alternated between a sense of gigantic repose and a nervous, intense, sometimes aggressively quickfire combination of musical figures. While some might place his music close to European modernism, its real significance lies in its distillation and assimilation of certain American traditions.

Brown was born in Lunenberg, Massachusetts, in 1926. As a young trumpeter he encountered the American marching band tradition. "I come from New England," he recalled, "with a background very much like Ives, playing in bands – "Columbia, Gem Of The Ocean" and all that stuff – and later in jazz big bands." His love of jazz proved to be long lasting. He had formed his own group while still at high school, later, in the Army Air Corps, he found himself playing next to saxophonist Zoot Sims, whom he befriended. He also had varying degrees of contact with such significant jazz players as Bob Brookmeyer, Jimmy Guiffre, Gerry Mulligan, Ornette Coleman and Eric Dolphy.

Brown studied mathematics and engineering at Northeastern University from 1944-45. No surprise, then, that he was drawn to the musical theories of Russian born musicologist and mathematician Joseph Schillinger, whom he described as "a liberating force in the same way John [Cage] was a liberating force". Schillinger's techniques – highly mathematical permutational and generative procedures within strictly governed quasi-scientific parameters – helped Brown to discover his own method of composing, which approached total serialism, generated by small, rhythmic, motivic cells.

Brown's reference points were further broadened by his appreciation of new tendencies in parallel art forms. Working as a Schillinger teacher of jazz arranging in Denver, Colorado in 1950-51, he was attracted to avant garde writing and visual art – Kenneth Patchen, Alexander Calder and Jackson Pollock in particular. He plunged into a period of intense experimentation, investigating the possibility of making a score sculptural or kinetically motorised, even 'cinematographic'. He remembered: "I designed a lot of things that were motorised. The origin of *December 1952* was to be a box that was to sit on the piano... with a series of bolts and pulleys which moved



things through space. Before this, I designed another piece – Buckminster Fuller and Calder influenced; it was to be a globe with strips of music paper interacting with the circumference, the globe was to sit in a bowl of water. The pianist would play whatever came up closest to him."

A meeting with John Cage and Merce Cunningham in Denver was a decisive turning point. His first wife Carolyn had been invited to dance with the Cunningham Company in New York, where she became one of the troupe's leading stars. At Cage's invitation, Brown joined her there to participate in *Project For Music For Magnetic Tape* (1952-55), which required Cage and Brown to spend most weekdays splicing and assembling tape parts, realising early electronic pieces by Wolff, Cage, Feldman and his own *Octet For 8 Loudspeakers*. This is a brilliant, energetic essay in concrete sound assemblage, featuring proto-sampling and snippets of operatic voice, trombone, percussion and noise encapsulated in a tight rhythmic structure.

Among Brown's other significant works are *Folio*, which the composer described as his "experiments in notation and performance process". To the parameters of pitch, duration, amplitude and timbre, he added another: that of the performer, to be dealt with in various ways according to the piece in question. In his subsequent 1952 pieces, he slowly reduced the amount of written directives – *Oct 1952* was traditionally notated, albeit not metrically rational – leaving the performer to make certain decisions about rests or continuity. Written on a giant stave, *November 1952* utilised single tones, or groups of them, rather like a mobile – moving within and around each other in any continuity. But *December 1952* took the most radical step: the removal of traditional sign systems

This was the New York avant garde's heroic period in all the arts, not just music. "[Willem] De Kooning, [Philip] Guston... We were conversant with them all," he recalled. "They used to be the ones who would come to our concerts. I mean, the musicians thought we were kooky; they thought we were nuts, they wouldn't even show up. I don't know if the painters liked our music either... but they showed up!"

After the *Folio* pieces, a more centred balance between precisely notated components and elastic variability made itself felt, culminating in *25 Pages* (1953) for between one and 25 pianos, *Available Forms 1 & 2*, (1961/62), *Corroboree* for three pianos (1964), *Novara* for ensemble (1962), *Calder Piece* (1966) for percussion and sculptural mobile, and the *String Quartet* (1965). Other pieces of the late 60s and early 70s – such as *Modules 1-3* (1966-69) and *Cross Sections And Colour Fields* (1972-75), both for large orchestra and focusing on building specific sonorous events – are sparer in their material.

His method might have delegated much of the decision-making to the musician or conductor, but Brown objected to the term 'chance music'. His main aesthetic point of departure from Cage consisted in his use of improvisation and conscious choice. Cornelius Cardew, reviewing a performance of *Available Forms 2* in Cologne in 1963, pointed to some of Brown's special qualities in writing for orchestra: "The vital interaction brought about by the fact of there being two conductors thinking independently ensures a constant awakeness on the part of the musicians and audience, and the raw coincidences of the sonority, and the desperate individual efforts made by musicians to keep up and play their parts, were like a gust of fresh air sweeping through the audience".

Brown's gift for sculpting and moulding sounds spontaneously through his conducting was remarkable. He was extremely agile both conceptually and physically, and would often dip into his 'available forms' on the page: combining, shifting, sampling – sometimes at breakneck speed. It was rather like watching a jazz conductor such as Gil Evans in action. Not for nothing did Feldman jokingly refer to Brown as "the lone arranger".

We have much to be thankful for in Earle Brown's music, not least the rethinking of the possibilities of a conductor's relationship to musicians, the opening out into unforeseen soundworlds through graphic notation, and the spontaneous realisation of form in performance – all neglected issues in much present day composition. The early indeterminate pieces can still be an exhilarating adventure for performers, while the whole arena of composition that includes improvisatory elements for musicians and directors – and not just as 'tokenism' – is an issue that remains open for the future. In Brown's case, it reflected a truly deep understanding of jazz. When rehearsing an ensemble, many, if not most all of his references were to jazz, even if the music didn't sound anything like it. While most classical composers influenced by jazz have foolishly attempted to imitate the sound of 'jazz styles', Brown knew better. Here, perhaps, lies one of Brown's most radical contributions: distilling the essence of improvisational traditions into a coherent contemporary classical practice. *Earle Brown, composer, 26 December 1926-2 July 2002. Website: www.earle-brown.org. David Ryan is currently producing a CD of Brown's works including* Folio, Four Systems, Corroboree *and* Tracking Pierrot, *which is due for release on Matchless later this year*

ROBOT IN DISGUISE

Cafe Del Mar, Alan Hearst, Sailor Gerard, Lounique Boutique of Tomorrow, Ill Gotti: Uwe Schmidt's many alliases have been watched by a variety of electronica styles since he relocated from Frankfurt to Santiago to set up his further interesting label. Back in Europe with a Latin southern lover's outfit, he guides Kim Hastings through his movements around Chicago.

Photos: Sam Fiyasena

We could be anywhere, sitting in the empty ground-floor bar of an international hotel at a table advertising Bacardi cocktail recipes from all over the world. A fountain splashes unheard and unnoticed in a fake Spanish courtyard. Bottles in bars rarely change that much, and it's often hard to find anything really new. Even globally renowned boozehound Ernest Hemingway was forced to admit that most strange-sounding and exotic drinks usually end up tasting of aniseed. Uwe Schmidt, dressed with neat anonymity in tan shirt and slacks, surveys the room with the casual intensity of a practised traveller. "Wednesday was kind of weird," he remarks of Señor Coconut's first appearance at London's Royal Festival Hall. "I had the feeling the people didn't really know what it was about. It wasn't promoted and we were not announced or anything, so they missed the joke. There was no communication possible and it got a bit cold, I think."

Better known as Atom Heart from his days on the Frankfurt Techno scene during the 90s, Schmidt has been invited over to take part in David Bowie's Meltdown festival as Señor Coconut Y Su Conjunto, a fiendishly clever reconstruction of Kraftwerk's greatest hits as interpreted by a traditional Latin American dance group. Originally booked to perform to a non-seated audience in the Hall's foyer area, Señor Coconut's actual debut took place earlier than scheduled as unannounced support to Afro-Peruvian singer Susana Baca. Although greeted with polite applause and cheery bemusement, it soon became clear that 'The Robots', when presented as a straight faced, sultry cha-cha-cha, would never be more than a mixed pleasure for people who take the deep traditions of Latin rhythm seriously.

And yet what Señor Coconut represents is the perfect lingua franca: an adaptive musical system that has the potential to go anywhere and fit in with anything. People who've never heard of Atom Heart, or even Senor Coconut, find the concept of 'Latin Kraftwerk' beguiling. Already available in Japan, Hong Kong, Germany and the USA, and rereleased in the UK this summer, the original album of Kraftwerk covers, *El Baile Aleman*, has been in circulation since 1999. Its distinctive sound can be heard from tourist hotel lobbies in Belize to late night Easy Listening shows on Austrian radio. As a two word formula, "Latin Kraftwerk" couldn't be more basic or immediate. Neither term, however, appears on the album's cover art. Even the title, which translates as *The German Dance*, gives little away. It's only when you examine the track listing, composer credits and the exuberant accompanying sleevenotes that the audacious scale of the project becomes apparent.

SHOWROOM DUMMIES (CHA-CHA-CHA)

"The whole idea started as a joke," Schmidt recalls. "I was joking with a friend of mine about what you could do to Kraftwerk, but it wasn't meant to be a project or anything. And then I woke up one morning with "Neon Lights" as a cha-cha-cha sounding in my head and that seemed to be an interesting idea. So I started to put it together, looking for samples. One of the ideas was how a traditional Latin American band would cover Kraftwerk if there were such a connection. This is a key point, because I live in Chile now, and if you speak to traditional Latin American musicians they're just historically informed about their own background. They have no connections to European or electronic music, so they don't know Kraftwerk. They have no idea who Kraftwerk are. I thought it would be interesting to imagine how it would sound if the connection existed, so I had to create an artificial band and say, 'OK, how many instruments are in the band? What are the arrangements? How would a Latin arranger transfer these songs, and which instruments would take which part? What's the line-up?' Once you get into this kind of thinking, you have to be very detailed and conscious about stuff like that."

Painstakingly reassembled out of samples taken from Schmidt's record collection, even down to the album's bizarre, spoken word introduction, the Kraftwerk covers on *El Baile Aleman* are alive with attention to conceptual detail. The car on "Autobahn" wilfully refuses to start, while picking up nothing but Spanish language stations on its radio. Even though each track is listed alongside its appropriate dance rhythm, sampled timbales still maintain the relentless, high speed clatter of the "Metal On Metal" sequence from *Trans Europe Express*; clavés echo the pellucid electronic counterpoint of "Neon Lights". Despite Schmidt's assertion that he was not concerned with Kraftwerk's own approach to their music, the album displays in its execution a thoroughness and precision that Ralf Hütter and Florian Schneider might envy. Señor Coconut and his identikit musicians are even presented as computer-generated wireframe mannequins on the inner sleeve, while the disc itself bears the proud legend, "Recorded in Santiago de Chile 1999". A complex arrangement of considerations lies hidden behind that simple statement, one that stretches from the Frankfurt club scene of the early 1990s to the western seaboard of South America, linking old worlds with the new.

Schmidt relocated to Santiago in Chile in 1997, ostensibly "to get away from the European influence of music", most notably in the future development of Techno. At the same time, this self-imposed exile throws up complicated questions of authenticity and identity. Over the past decade, Atom Heart projects have been credited to a large number of alter egos – Coeur Atomique, Atomu Shinzo, Lassigue Bendthaus, LB, Erik Satin, Midisport, Silver Sound, Los Samplers, The Roger Tubesound Ensemble, Geeez 'N' Gosh... the list is probably meant to be endless. "It's not like I'd make music and have tracks lying around and then at a certain point summarise them under a certain name," Schmidt explains. "Usually I'm working on all the parameters of a project and on a lot of things at the same time, which can be titles, lyrics, designs, typography and samples. I'm collecting all of these at the same time, but they're not linked at all. For certain records I have the artwork ready two years before the actual release of the album. I have stuff lying around and all of a sudden they fall together. That happens very often. I find samples and a style and at the end, basically, I invent the character or what I call 'the image'. I create like a fake world... a fake character."

This approach goes far beyond the speculative blend of street tag and myth science traditionally favoured by DJs and producers. It's about Techno undergoing its next evolutionary shift and learning to 'pass' for something else: the brighter, the more flamboyant and exotic, the better. "His releases seem like cultural artefacts from the remote future," read the liner notes for *Replicant Rumba Rockers*, a mix of Atom Heart tracks remastered and edited by Cologne's Burnt Friedman, his longstanding collaborator in the duo Flanger. "An invented world that does not automatically give the authentic preference over the fake." You could feel the sense of doubt and uncertainty that statement provokes running through the audience on that night in London as a smiling, evidently competent bunch of merengue musicians swung into Kraftwerk's

"Showroom Dummies". Never has the song's opening line appeared so fraught with meaning: *"We're standing here, exposing ourselves."* Is Santiago burning? Bent in deep concentration over their instruments, the Replicant Rumba Rockers occupy centre stage, dressed "in a costume whose worldliness is self-evident – draped at first in the traditional hues of simulation, but ultimately cloaked in their own inscrutable logic".

HOMECOMPUTER (MERENGUE)

A self-taught musician who began experimenting with drum machines in his teens, Schmidt found himself part of the rapidly expanding Frankfurt Techno scene at the start of the 1990s. After the Industrial beats of Severed Heads, Cabaret Voltaire and Skinny Puppy, Acid House was a revelation. "It was really amazing," Schmidt says of his first experience at an Acid party. "I thought, 'My God, this is a good moment to do something, right at the start and go on from there'." What emerged from such euphoria was a collective Frankfurt sound, characterised by the Ambient experimentalism of Pete Namlook and the stylised trance-inducing rhythms of Sven Väth. Schmidt himself made significant contributions to the scene, working with Resistance D on their influential early releases and recording the classic "Mihon" (Pod/Rising High) with Ata and Heiko as Ongaku. "When I started releasing records, I was surrounded by people who had an enthusiasm for this new musical style, people who had started the movement in Frankfurt around 1990," he recalls. "A lot of DJs were friends of mine, people who were making record labels, and all of a sudden, without realising it, I was in the middle of what became the Frankfurt scene and I was a part of it. I just did what I thought was fun to do without really being aware of classifications or defining a style or anything. But then later it was classified, and that's when I began to feel uncomfortable."

What contributed to that feeling of discomfort was the suspicion that the possibilities afforded by the new dance technology were slowly being defined and circumscribed. The taste of aniseed was beginning to seep through. "The moment something's classifiable, to me it's a dead style," Schmidt declares. "That's what happened with Techno. In the very early days Techno didn't exist as a term. It changed name all the time. It wasn't classifiable, and then in 1994 it was 'Techno', and I really had the feeling, 'Hey, that's it... it's over'."

In 1994 he set up his Rather Interesting label "because I was getting really, really bored with not being allowed to do different stuff by record companies. Everything I did, people said, 'No. Techno's what's happening. Why don't you just do Techno?' I was really struggling with doing different stuff and trying to release it. Finding a suitable record company was much more difficult than making the music, in fact. So I founded Rather Interesting and did the stuff I thought was fun to do." He describes label policy as being a "zig-zag thing", swerving from one style or sound to another in order to confound expectations. Releases have ranged from zero degree Ambient to psychedelic experimentalism, HipHop, Industrial dance and mutant Easy Listening. There is, however, something measured and precise about Schmidt's approach. It's one that has evidently been thought through yet remains deeply personal all the same. "It's difficult to analyse," he sighs, "but I always feel very dissatisfied when people start classifying things or saying, 'OK, this is the guy who's doing this or that', because I feel that that's not me."

Perhaps the most curious shift in identity is revealed in the lengthening list of individuals with whom Schmidt is creatively involved, from Namlook, Pascal FEOS and Sieg Über Die Sonne in Frankfurt, to Burnt Friedman, Costa Rica's own Lisa Carbon and Tetsu Inoue in New York. Inoue, who records with Schmidt as Datacide, is a very early collaborator. "I met him in 91 or 92 in Frankfurt," he remembers. "He was hanging out with friends of mine on a stopover from New York to Tokyo. They said, 'There's this guy and he doesn't know Frankfurt and he doesn't speak German and he's got the flu, so can he come over to the studio and hang out with you?' I said sure, come over. We started to talk and became friends. Then I visited him in New York. In the same very natural way we started playing music together. The first Datacide was very much an instinctive, non-planned thing, and from then on we've become much more conceptual. We've always worked together and been in touch. It's more like a friendship but with a musical side to it."

However, Schmidt's releases with Lisa Carbon caused the most confusion. The futuristic blend of Latin rhythms and electronic programming on the 1992 *Stereo Cocktail* album were indignantly dismissed as "not music" by one magazine, while *Trio De Janiero*, a 1997 follow-up featuring Pete Namlook on guitar, was greeted with blank indifference, as was the first Señor Coconut album, *El Gran Baile*. "There was no such thing as a fused Latin electronic kind of thing and really people couldn't classify it," Schmidt reasons. "Only the Japanese record companies got the idea behind it."

Trio De Janiero was eventually picked up for Haruomi Hosono's Daisy World, while *El Gran Baile*, with its virtuoso blend of rattling Industrial beats and mid-tempo Latin sway, came out on ex-Deee-Lite DJ Towa Tei's Akashik. Both albums have subsequently been remastered for the European and American markets, which might well have finally caught up with the art and artifice of what Towa Tei presciently referred to back in 1995 as 'Future Listening'.

MUSIC NON STOP (CUMBIA)

Sure, Señor Coconut may be just one big PoMo joke, but there's a smooth machine logic to Latin rhythms that adapts well to Techno. Meanwhile, something about the sound of the marimba and the vibraphone recalls the earliest days of electronic music's development. Schmidt's move to Chile to evade European musical influence practically amounts to its rediscovery. Add to this the fact that over a third of Chile's population is under 30 and located predominantly in its cities, and that's one appreciably large urban dance squad. Chilean singer and bass player Argenis Brito, who supplies the voice of Señor Coconut both live and on the CD release, is also one half of Mambotur, working with programmer Pier Bucci to create Latino electronica out of traditional percussion, minimal Techno, deep dub and ethereal Ambient effects. Their recent debut album, *Atina Latino*, credits Atom on five of its tracks for mixing, arrangements and vocal recording.

"They were very influenced by what I was doing," Schmidt declares. "When I first arrived in Chile they had just started to make music. What's typical for Chile and South America in general is that people there five-six years ago were very much emulating European Techno music that was totally out of fashion over here. A lot of people saw what I was doing, which was basically what they should have done, but which is what I was there to do. Like I said, the first Coconut was not labelled because it wasn't possible to label it. So it wasn't really working, I would say. But if you keep repeating something, it becomes labelled and then other people can refer to it, and that's what's happening with Mambotur. I think they profited a lot from what Coconut produced, that kind of effect." Brito was also a part of the Gonzalo Martinez project, alongside Atom Heart and Sieg Über Die Sonne's Pink Elin and Dandy Jack, whose devilishly handsome features provide the public face for Señor Coconut as presented on all the album covers. The shifting identities and fake presences continue to proliferate.

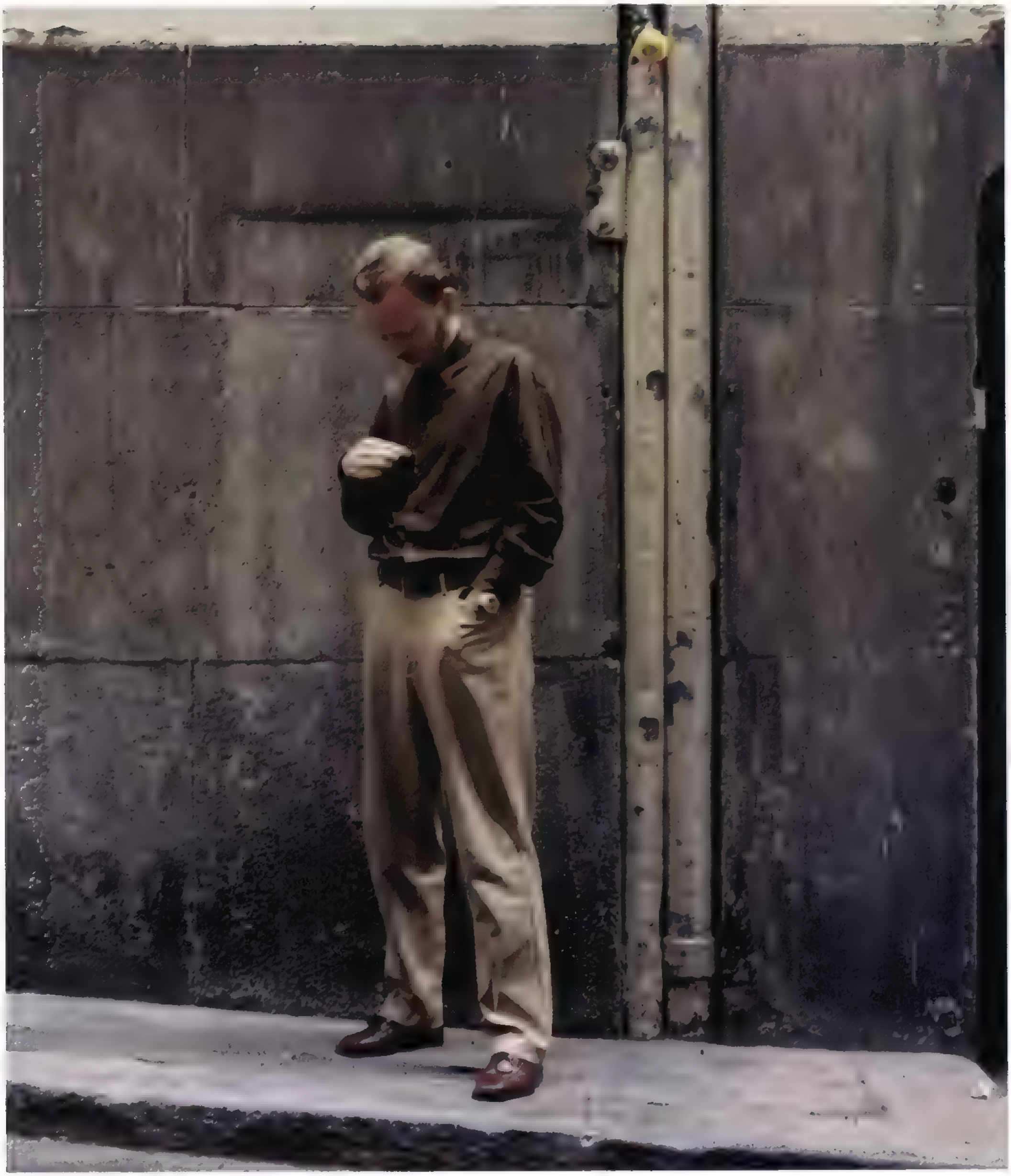
Something about Schmidt's selection of Kraftwerk as the subject for his second Señor Coconut project suggests an ironic awareness of how things have changed. The days of the fixed concept and single idea are over. For better or worse, Kraftwerk are now stuck with being Kraftwerk. Only through tributes, parodies and covers can any further creativity be guaranteed. How do they feel about Señor Coconut? "Fortunately, Florian liked it a lot," Schmidt reveals. "My idea had been just to bypass them because I knew it would be impossible to get in contact with them, so I just did the record and released it first in Japan. A copy of a copy of a copy arrived in Kraftwerk's hands, and it just said 'Latin Kraftwerk', no 'Señor Coconut'. It was blank. They had no idea where it had come from, if it was programmed, or whether it was even from Latin America. Perhaps that enabled them to see it from a more neutral background, not like a German trying to profit from their history. And they liked it. Florian was really into it, but they had no idea who it was."

A friend who supplies Florian Schneider with new music took along Schmidt's *Pop Artificielle*, an album released under the name LB, featuring cover versions of Bowie's "Ashes To Ashes", ABC's "Be Near Me" and Donovan's "Sunshine Superman". Florian said he already knew it and suggested playing the mysterious 'Latin Kraftwerk' recording instead. They ended up comparing the two albums, completely unaware that they were both by the same person. Only later did Schmidt's friend make the connection. "[Florian and I] met in Frankfurt once it was released in Germany, and he saw us playing live a few times because he's a very social person," Schmidt says. "As for Ralf, I have no idea, really. He sort of tolerated it, but I have the feeling he's not too fond of people messing with his stuff."

Watch Schmidt standing impassively at his sampler during a Señor Coconut performance, while the musicians labour enthusiastically over "Trans Europe Express", singing about their plans to meet Iggy Pop and David Bowie back in Düsseldorf City, and it's hard not to think of Kraftwerk up on stage letting the machines do all the work for them. "It's like Kraftwerk done in Latin style but performed by a Danish band," he says, smiling. "What's going on here?"

Made up of session musicians recruited to promote the European release of *El Baile Aleman*, the Señor Coconut group hasn't rehearsed since they were first brought together in Denmark two years ago. After extensive tours of Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy and Spain, they are now simply flown in to whatever event has booked them to perform. Their last concert appearance prior to David Bowie's Meltdown Festival was in Mexico, and that was over four months ago. So has he met Bowie yet? "No," Schmidt laughs. "Nobody has."

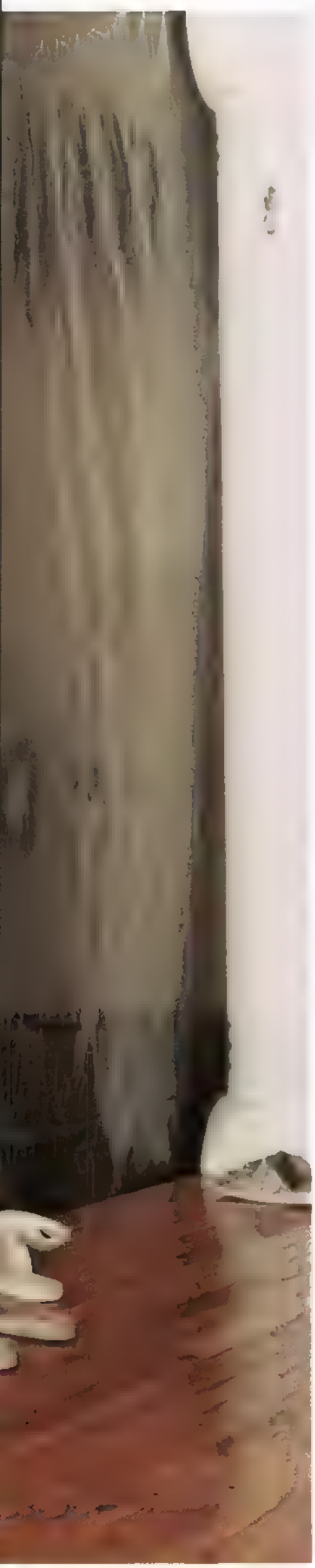
"That's the very weird twist about the band," he concludes, smiling. "They're not into electronic music. They don't have an electronic music background. They're paid to perform the record, but they're sort of like robots in the end." ☐ *Websites: www.delhaze.net, www.atom-heart.com*



RANDOM TONE BURSTS

Digital composer Yasunao Tone's paramedia assault on old paradigms has led him from Tokyo to New York, via Japanese Fluxus pranks, work with Merce Cunningham and Yoko Ono, and destabilising CDs with Scotch tape

Words Alan Licht Photos Chr s Buck



"My task is to wake people up from the 19th century," declares Yasunao Tone. "Walter Benjamin said that people are still dreaming in the 19th century, he wanted to wake people up from it. Concert halls are just that, a 19th century dream place." As a composer, writer and artist, Tone has made avant garde performances since the late 50s in spaces ranging from Tokyo art galleries to New York's Shea Stadium. His obscurity might be explained by the fact that he somehow managed to avoid recording his music until the early 90s. To some, he is a key figure from the Japanese wing of the Fluxus art movement and Japan's 60s radical art scene, others may have seen him playing at multimedia festivals such as Lovebytes and Sonar, or heard his legendary Tzadik release, *Solo For Wounded CD* (1997), composed entirely of malfunctioning CD skipping, or caught one of his rare performances with Christian Marclay and Jim O'Rourke. Tone admits that his work is "hard to categorise – it's off category". The diversity of noises that emanate from his digital-era electronic works rivals that of his own activities over the last four decades. This year, his achievements have been recognised by the Austrian Prix Ars Electronica, who awarded him this year's prize for digital music.

After studying literature at Chiba University, Tone began to frequent Tokyo's contemporary music concerts, where he kept running into former classmate Shuko Mizuno, who in turn introduced him to a fellow musicology student, Takehisa Kosugi. Kosugi and Mizuno had been improvising together on violin and cello respectively, and Tone soon joined them on saxophone. While he maintains he had no formal training, Tone did practise the sax, which he chose because it "was easier than the violin". Other students followed, and they became the first free improvised music group in Japan (if not the world; this is 1958). "We thought then, our improvisational performance could be a form of automatic writing, in a sense that the drip painting of Jackson Pollock was a form of automatic writing," he says. When a name was required for a dance performance, Tone came up with Ongaku, Japanese for 'Music'. An archival CD, *Music Of Group Ongaku*, released on Sound Art Library several years ago, provides an invaluable glimpse at the random noise generating that most listeners would associate with mid-60s Europe. "The question I posited then," he says, "was could Duchamp's *Paris Air* or urinal be translated into musical performance? That led us to use everyday objects as instruments." Tone's study of Dada and Surrealism provided the conceptual framework, it was only later that he listened to Ornette Coleman or Eric Dolphy. Tone also points to different ethnic musics, particularly Indian and the music used in Noh and Kabuki theatre, as an influence. In 1961 and 62, Tone and Kosugi also participated in Tokyo concerts by Yoko Ono (mostly pieces later published in her book *Grapefruit*) and Toshi Ichiyanagi (including a piece in which IBM computer punchcards were distributed to performers as a graphic score).

1962 also marked Tone's first solo concert, billed as One Man Show by a Composer, whose 15 pieces lasted six or seven hours. One of the pieces premiered at the concert was *Anagram For Strings*, another graphic score composed of all glissandi (much later recorded by Kosugi and Malcolm Goldstein for a Fluxus issue of the cassette magazine *Tellus*). Through a connection with Ichiyanagi, Fluxus founder George Maciunas had asked the group for tapes and scores. Tone submitted *Anagram*; Maciunas published it, and had it performed at a Fluxus festival in Copenhagen in late 1962. Maciunas asked Tone for more scores, which Ono offered to translate and send off to NY via a GI friend, but they never arrived. In 1965 Tone organized a Fluxus week in Tokyo, and since moving to New York he continues to be invited to Fluxus events and retrospectives, collaborating frequently with Alison Knowles, although he concedes that Fluxus was only properly "historically meaningful" from 1962-66. "Works are on exhibit in museums," he comments, "in such a way that works originally meant to be played as a game or toys [are placed] in glass showcases only to be looked at, and the audience can't play with them. How can it be possible to make Fluxus still alive?"

By the mid-60s Tone was at a peak of activity, using a broad approach he refers to as "paramedia". In addition to composing for films and dance – even collaborating with the psychedelic group The Mops on a score for a ballet based on Mishima's *Patriotism* – Tone became increasingly involved with the Tokyo art scene, participating in performance group Hi Red Centre's *Cleaning Piece* during the 1964 Tokyo Olympics (they posed as street cleaners in the Ginza district, stopping traffic for three hours and even receiving cooperation from the police), *Closing Event* (which locked out a gallery space for a week and then opened the last day for an opening for the closing) and the *Yamate Loop Train Event* (a happening on a commuter train). Group Ongaku only performed publicly a few times and was largely inactive after 1962; Kosugi left for New York in 1964. When he returned in the late 60s, he asked Tone to join his new ensemble, Taj Mahal Travellers, but Tone declined ("wasn't my style"). By this time he was writing for art magazines, organising a computer art group, Team Random, which created the first computer art festival in Japan, Biogode Process, and running a workshop for art students out of his home. He took on a year long project in the summer of 1971, editing a complete retrospective of 60s avant garde art in Japan that was spread over 12 monthly issues of the magazine *Bijustu Techo*. The task culminated in two 400-page issues devoted to 50 years of avant garde art in Japan from 1916 to 1968. This actually led to Tone's departure from his homeland. "I summarised everything [in the articles] and I summarised myself," he says. "What could I do after this? I felt a sort of emptiness, that I was finished... New York was the natural place to go." He first detoured to San Francisco to visit a friend "in the last year of the hippy movement. I stayed in a commune. . I was attracted to hippy culture." Leaving Japan in June 1972, he finally arrived in New York in December, where he's lived ever since.

Two years later he began a long association with Merce Cunningham's Dance Company. First he created a video piece, "Clockwork Video", in which three turntables were set to run at different speeds (one revolution per minute, hour and twelve hours) while video cameras were mounted on them showing the dance studio and the outside landscape; this was later modified to show three parts of a naked woman's body. Tone also asked Jeff Lohn, who later formed Theoretical Girls with Glenn Branca, to read texts for one Cunningham performance. Another long-lived piece

composed for Cunningham was *Geography And Music* which accompanied the dance *Roadrunners* from 1979 to 1987. A text translated from Chinese is read alternately by word, syllable or phrase through two microphones that gate a piano and viola ("the player can't predict which sound comes out"). John Cage and David Tudor were two of its distinguished performers. Kosugi became music director of the Cunningham company after David Behrman left in 1977; apparently Kosugi was uncomfortable with using such a close friend, so Tone did not compose for the company again until the mid-90s.

Tone went on to form unusual collaborations in New York, performing in John Zorn's "Jai Alai" ("George Lewis and I were the special guests; we ignored John's instructions!") at the legendary Club 57 on St Mark's Place (run by Ann Magnuson); in Butch Morris's "Current Trends In Racism In Modern America" (Morris's first improvisational orchestral piece); with new music flautist Barbara Held (who commissioned him to write two pieces which would turn up on her *Upper Air Observation* CD); with Roscoe Mitchell at the Vision Festival in 2000; and more recently with Christian Marclay, Stephen Vitiello and Russell Haswell, and a one-off group with Elliott Sharp, Jim O'Rourke and Zbigniew Karkowski. "I have more venues and a broader audience now," he says. "In the 90s there was a secession of art from Western classical music, which became part of institutions such as conservatories, opera houses, orchestras... it is not art music, but nothing different from mainstream music. Or from folk music – they both stopped developing and deconstructing themselves. So there's a vacuum. In this vacuum, club music has evolved as electronic/experimental music. Young musicians emerged in this vacuum with the democratisation of technical means for recording/generating sound by development of technology, which brings about awareness of new art form, sound art."

Now it's become common for experimental music to be found in museums and galleries, but Tone had already done a sound installation in an annual group art show, Yomiuri Independent Salon, back in 1962. "I used a tape recorder with mechanical loop device," he recalls. "So the recorded sound was always running without any interruption. Then I wrapped it in a large sheet of white cloth which was crumpled, so it looked like just a white cloth making sound. An art critic wrote of it, 'Finally, a museum sounds'." Unsurprisingly, Tone finds a kinship with the younger artists who have, however unwittingly, followed his path. "My direction hasn't changed since the 60s. I just coincide with this phenomenon. I have always been outside the Western classical tradition, which they are, too."

Tone's own work in digital audio began in the mid 80s when he began experimenting with CD players. He chanced upon a book, *Science Seminar For The Familiar*, with a chapter on digital recording, which alerted him to the error correcting program in CD players which kicks in if a one is misread as a zero in the machine's binary codes. Since the error produced "a totally different sound, unknown sound", he looked for a way to override the error-correcting system; a friend suggested using Scotch tape with many pinholes in it on the CD itself, which worked. Although it sounds like CD skipping, that's not really what it is. By blocking some information bits on the CD with the tape, "The numbers are altered so it becomes totally different information," he explains. "The Scotch tape enables me to make burst errors without significantly affecting the system and stopping the machine. The error-correcting software constantly interpolates between individual bits of misread information, but if adjacent bits are misread, a burst occurs and the software mutes the output. If a significant number of bursts occur in one frame the error increases until it eventually overrides the system."

The tape also changes pitch and timbre, plus the speed and direction of the disc. The results are uncontrollable, unrepeatable and unpredictable. The sheer number of brief, corrosive phrases can be mind-boggling. Tone uses primitive CD machines because they malfunction more effectively than newer ones. He first used "prepared CDs" in Kay Nishikawa's dance suite *Techno-Eden* in 1985. "For a live performance I made a memo that briefly described characteristics of conspicuous sounds, indicating track number and time counter as a broad guide map which served as a score," he relates. "During the performance the memo was almost unusable, so I had to rely on sheer chance. Playing prepared CDs according to the score was like advancing in a maze where ambush was everywhere, and that made the performance situation all the more interesting."

This was followed by his own performance of *Music For Two CD Players* at Experimental Intermedia a few months later. Tone remembers John Cage laughing out loud throughout this performance, then rushing up to him to shake his hand. In both cases, the CDs Tone used collaged "famous music, so you recognised parts of Beethoven and Tchaikovsky tunes but very much distorted".

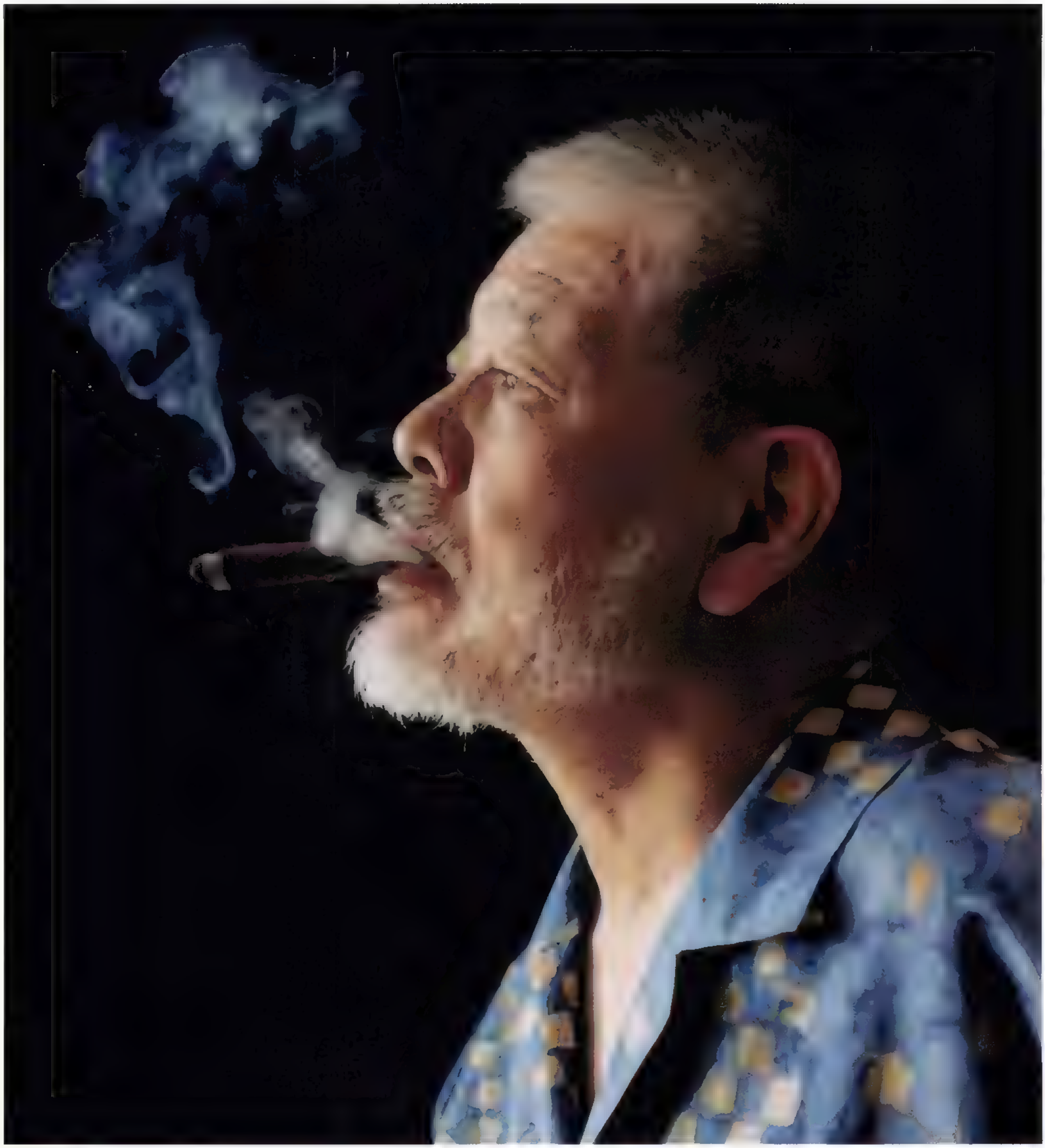
The digital era also brought Tone into recording for the first time. Previously, he says, "I was not satisfied with recording because it presupposes to repeat the same sound over and over." Indeed, pieces like *Molecular Music* (1982-85), in which oscillators were controlled by films and light sensors on a screen, had been constructed in a way that they would never sound the same way twice. He had long considered his pieces unrecordable. "In a performance the audience in the front rows can hear the contrast between amplified and unamplified sound," he claims. "In a recording that disappears. It's also more spatial, and you can't reproduce that in a record – maybe if you sit in the centre [between the speakers] in one position. [In the 80s] a producer for Nonesuch offered to have my pieces recorded, and I told him that's very good, but if I think about it, for my pieces, there would be too much lost. I turned him down."

However, Thomas Buckner of Lovely Music offered to release a CD in 1992, and Tone found a way to use the medium to his satisfaction. He took ancient Chinese poetic texts and converted each Chinese character (in their original form, which are closer to images than the modern form) into photographic images. He put the images into the computer and digitised them, transforming them simply into zeroes and ones. Then he obtained histograms from the binary codes and had the computer read the histograms as sound waves. "The result was noise in all senses," he says. "When you play the CD, what you receive is not images as message, but sound which is simply an excess. According to information theory this is none other than noise; and as the French word for noise, parasite, indicates, it is parasitic on the host – that is, message. But in this case there is no host, only parasite on the CD. Therefore this CD is pure noise. Technically speaking, the sound of the CD is digital noise, also."

The result was *Musica Iconologos*, an exercise in a variant on sound poetry taken to a logical technological extreme – text translated entirely into a long series of short phrases of splintering electronic noise, each unique. "It was never recorded – the sound was in the computer and transferred to CD," he says. "There was no conflict between the spatial element and the record. My whole principle is, I don't want to represent myself in sound. I converted text into images and images into sound, so that's perfect. And it turned out nobody had ever done that before. I was very pleased." Tone's *Solo For Wounded CD* was simply *Musica Iconologos* prepared with Scotch tape: "I alter my own CD, this time totally distorted so nobody could recognise the original." Coming at the height of the remix fad, this berserk, stuttering reconfiguration was rightly hailed as a milestone.

Tone has taken these ideas even further in a CD-ROM project he's been assembling since 1996. He's doing another sonic translation of an ancient poetic text, this time the mammoth *Man'yoshu*, 4,516 poems dating from 9th century Japan, and considered an early masterpiece of the country's literature. Again the characters are transformed into pictures and then sound waves, but in this case the poems (which were still primarily transmitted orally) were set down in an odd system that combines 2,400 Chinese characters with 89 Japanese syllables, with some characters chosen based on Japanese phonetic value and others based on puns or wordplay. The irregularity of the transcription is tailor-made for Tone's penchant for unpredictability. He shows me the program on his computer: he has logged 20 books of the poems, having made a "sound dictionary" of the characters and syllables and realising the poems through combination and permutation. On top of that, he transfers them to CD-R and prepares, or "wounds", the CD. One example has just been released on the Spanish compilation, *Un Tributo A James T Russell*.

An earlier piece, *Trio For A Flute Player* (1990), commissioned and recorded by flautist Barbara Held also used poems from the *Man'yoshu*. Here the poems are read through the flute's mouthpiece; in the score, the calligraphy of the poem is overlaid on the staff but corresponds to the flautist's fingerings rather than notes. The fingerings trigger an oscillator. The results sound quaint compared to the rapid-fire digital miniaturism Tone is specialising in now (no wonder he has a CD coming out on Mego in the unspecified future). Once accused by George Maciunas of being "too Cageian", Tone has effectively pushed the idea of indeterminacy into the 21st century. Where eliminating the spoken text might have once seemed cold, in wounding the CD he actually humanises the process. "Machines are designed not to make mistakes," he concludes. "In our behaviour we often make mistakes, so why not machines also? I added that reality to it. So, it's not destruction but an addition." *Yasunao Tone's* Wounded Man'Yo #38/9/2001 *3" CD is out now on Alku*



DRILLED TO INFINITY

Over 11 years, Gwale's Boredoms have evolved from a splenetic start-stop group to the unstoppable ferocity of their current mantric percussion barrage. In London, fellow teenage Tomishiro Kyo and Yoshimi P-We explain the meaning of Boredom, their twisted history, the group as lunatics, ape for recording underwater, and using discipline to channel chaotic energies. Meanwhile, on page 46, we provide a total guide to the Boredoms catalogue.

Words: Edwin Pouncey. Translation: Alan Cummings. Photo: [illegible]

"SHUT UP!" Yamataka Eye is screaming from behind his onstage control panel at London's Royal Festival Hall, as he swings a DJ CD player above his head in time to the feverish beat patterns exploding and ricocheting all around him. *"SHUT UP!"* he howls repeatedly, whirling his dreadlocks like demented helicopter blades at the three drummers who complete this latest incarnation of The Boredoms. Diagonally facing each other in a tight circle, Yoshimi P We (née Yokota), ATR and Yojiro hammer away at their kits in 4/4 time with unflinching determination and scalpel-sharp precision. *"SHUT UP! SHUT UP! SHUT UP!"* Eye persists, shouting ever louder over the swirling cacophony of drumming and electronic warp, to no apparent effect. But then you realise he's not so much barking commands as generating a repetitive vocal chant designed to elevate the quartet's playing to still higher levels of consciousness. Their spiralling vortex of Kodo-like rhythm and digital collision sucks the astounded audience out of their seats and lures them to the unofficial moshpit in front of the stage. By the close, the whole house has risen up as one for a standing ovation that gathers volume and momentum while The Boredoms file offstage. It's as if nobody wants the incredible noise to shut up or shut down. Refusing to leave, the audience would willingly ride its rising swells forever.

This is not the first time The Boredoms have given their listeners a brush with infinity. On their *Super Roots 5* album, they bring you within its reach on a series of neverending guitar crescendos. And in the beginning, the savage cut-ups, collages and musical collisions of their earliest experiments slashed the linear flow of time fastening down the present, and plunged you into an endless freefall through The Boredoms' bottomless noise. As their shape shifts with each new manifestation, the one constant through two decades of mutations is their way of tricking time out of joint. These time slippages are further stretched by the inevitable holes in most Westerners' knowledge of a career largely played out in Japan since their inception in 1986. With few Boredoms records obtaining a release abroad, keeping up with their mercurial changes is nigh impossible for anyone who isn't permanently logged on to the plethora of Boredoms Websites monitoring their moves. For the rest, confusion goes with the territory. A few years back The Boredoms used to nurture a playful chaos; in contrast, the intense, joyful and exciting music of their newest incarnation at the Royal Festival Hall hinges on the super-tight precision of the drumming, while self discipline has given their sound a keener edge.

Hailing from the southern port city of Osaka, which is also home to a thriving, deeply rooted noise culture pioneered by the likes of Masonna and Hijokaidan, The Boredoms first surfaced in the mid- to late 80s with Eye's crude *Anal By Anal* EP and The Boredoms' debut, *Osorezan No Stooges Kyo* (both were later slammed together under the title *Onanie Bomb Meets The Sex Pistols*). The follow-up, *Soul Discharge 99*, was given an extra boost when it was licensed to former Butthole Surfers bassist Kramer's Shimmy Disc label, but The Boredoms' underground cult status was secured shortly after, when they landed a recording contract with WEA Japan that miraculously promised them total creative freedom. Then as now, it allows them to work with American contemporaries like John Zorn and Sonic Youth, who both took The Boredoms under their respective wings, setting up various projects and collaborations, while encouraging them to take the music higher. Not that The Boredoms

needed pushing. In the early 90s, they abandoned etiquette and made rock behave in unnatural yet increasingly fascinating ways on *Wow 2* (a live recording supervised by Zorn), *Pop Tatari* (1992) and *Chocolate Synthesizer* (1995). The line-up blasting out that period's deliriously untamed mix of psychedelia, HipHop, hardcore punk and alien free jazz included Eye, original drummer and co-vocalist Toyohito Yoshikawa, guitarist Seiichi Yamamoto, bass player Hira and the dynamic drum duo of ATR and Yoshimi P-We (the latter doubling on trumpet). Though these astounding records made a profound impression on those lucky enough to hear them, neither Eye nor Yoshimi can remember a thing about them. "Listening to *Chocolate Synthesizer* now, both myself and Yoshimi have forgotten all about what music we played then," confesses Eye sleepily, the day after The Boredoms' London triumph. "Hearing it now comes as a shock, it's surprising. How did we actually do that? Is this the sort of music that we played? It's interesting, but it's also puzzling and we both wonder why it was we were actually able to do that."

YOUNG, LOUD AND SNOTTY

To properly understand how The Boredoms evolved their mutated punk disco to the incredible percussion-driven sound storm of today, it's necessary to return Eye to his dark past as the major catalyst behind one of Japan's most notorious 1980s noise/performance units, Hanatarashi. He first brought himself up to speed playing appalling electric guitar (by all accounts) in an early speedcore outfit called Jakotsubaba (meaning Snake Bone Witch), and ending most shows by diving onto the drums. He carried over this Metzger-like destructivism into Hanatarashi, Japanese for "the snot-nosed". Asked at the time for the origin of the name, Eye responded: "Just all of a sudden someone will punch me. When I think about getting hit, my nose starts to run, and by the time I get home my nose will be all stopped up. Really crammed with snot."

Drawing inspiration from San Francisco performance group Survival Research Laboratories (who created gladiatorial robots out of auto parts, decommissioned military hardware and dead animals) and self destructive hardcore icon GG Allin, Hanatarashi (the 'i' was later dropped) set out to be the most extreme act on the planet. Their tongue in cheek manifesto taunted the people they would have to kill to get there: "KILL THE ALL NOISE ARTISTS! WE HATE WHITEHOUSE. PISS OFF NWW ASSHOLE C93. SUCK PTV FUCK COIL. WE LOVE DISCO SOUND." Featuring Yamatsuka Eye (his original name, which he would change several times before he started calling himself Yamataka) on vocals and "bodyguard" Taketani on percussion, Hanatarashi's various attempts to create "a visual experience of war" are the stuff of legend. Most notoriously, Eye hotwired a mini-digger and ran amok with the machine in the hall where they were performing. But things only got out of hand when Eye accidentally smashed a hole in the wall with the digger's shovel, carved up the joint with circular saws, and spilt petrol on the wreckage.

Another time, Eye took an electric saw to a dead cat which he had found in an alley just before going onstage. The live reviews read more like despatches from a war zone: "Ten minutes after the show begins, the room is full of broken glass," described the shaken reviewer. "The fence set up to protect the audience was the first thing to be destroyed, and they are throwing pieces of the fence around. The audience are huddled like refugees in the corners of the hall. A broken pipe spewed water into the room. A gas burner was flaming. So much metal and glass and concrete was being thrown against the walls that I got cut just watching. The fire extinguishers were smashed. There was no applause, or indeed any sound from the audience. The fire alarm went off. The room was getting too smoky to see. There were little bits of dead, dry meat stuck to the walls and ceiling from the animal cutting."

By now, Eye was branded with a reputation for being hostile, unpredictable and dangerous. "Yamatsuka is clearly insane," insisted the same reviewer. In reality, Eye was much more unassuming. "I'm not charismatic at all," he admitted to interviewer Sakevi Yokoyama in 1985. "Hanatarashi is much more interesting to read about than to see or hear." Even so, listening to Hanatarashi's ultraviolent early recordings reveals that they're fuelled by the same energies firing the present Boredoms quartet. Only he now channels his earlier destructive impulses into a higher, more spiritual level of communication. No longer driven to repel and terrify, the only thing Eye wants to tear down today is the invisible boundary between performer and spectator.

BORN TO ANAL

By the time Hanatarashi had burned themselves out, Eye had developed a taste for rock. He signed on as drummer with the shortlived Acid Makki & Combi And Zombie, who featured future Boredoms members Seiichi Yamamoto on guitar and Hira on bass. For his part, Yamamoto wasn't immediately taken with the prospect of Eye's arrival. Before Acid Makki's singer Makki Sasara introduced them, Yamamoto's reaction was: "The Hanatarashi guy? He's scary! I hate him!" But the pair instantly bonded as musical allies. Eye later quit the group to sink the foundations for The Boredoms. Holed up in his bedroom's makeshift studio, he experimented with a multitrack recorder and cranked out cassette copies of the resulting 'Boretronix' on his own labels, ? Ltd, Mega Scum Groove Inc and Condome Cassex. His first homemade recording to make it onto vinyl was the *Anal By Anal* EP (aka *The Anal Trilogy*), released by the Japanese independent Transrecords. Written, recorded, mixed and mastered entirely on one hot summer's day, *Anal By Anal* features Eye yelping and gurgling over a basic guitar and a 'found' drumming instruction tape, before he brings it to a climax by screaming *"GO!"* at the top of his lungs. "The Boredoms started out as a bedroom project where I was just multitracking stuff myself," remembers Eye, when asked about the origins of *Anal By Anal*. "*Anal By Anal* was basically solo multitrack stuff. Now the group has no guitarist and bass player in it, so in a way that links into what The Boredoms were earlier."

The first version of the Boredoms proper came together in 1986 with Eye on vocals, his partner and bodyguard Taketani on drums, Mara Tabata on guitar and Hosoi on bass. During that summer, Taketani was replaced by the wild and eccentric drummer Toyohito Yoshikawa, and Acid Makki bassist Hira took over from Hosoi. When Mara Tabata later quit to join Zeni Geva, Eye seized the opportunity to draft his friend Seiichi Yamamoto into the group, which he had now officially baptised The Boredoms. Partly named after the early Buzzcocks' best known song, it was mainly chosen to reflect the mental state of its members, and they had every intention of living up to their name. "We were really really boring back when *Anal By Anal* had just come out and we were playing our first gigs," laughs Eye. "There were these really long gaps between the

songs. We'd take forever tuning up. Everyone would be falling asleep. We could really make the audience yawn. It was like there was nothing exciting about the music."

"I saw them back then and they were totally boring," confirms Yoshimi. "It was utterly tedious. There was no drive, it just went on and on. The gaps between the songs would be longer than the songs themselves. I remember it was so boring that I left the first time I saw them. That was the only time I saw them before I joined." Considering her to be a better drummer, Eye invited Yoshimi take over from Yoshikawa on drums in 1988. Yoshikawa was shifted to percussion to make way for her, and she soon became a permanent fixture. But why did she want to join such a boring lot in the first place? "I thought they would change if I joined," she replies. "Things became very fucked up when I joined. We'd do something, then forget about it, then do something else. In the same way the group has constantly kept changing."

"It changed a lot then," adds Eye. "We forgot the original concept of being boring. I think I wanted to recreate the feeling of a boring afternoon at a petrol station in the countryside with nothing to do. Apathy and weariness. Chronic apathy."

He has recently been thinking hard about to the original concept of the group, he reveals, continuing, "I think there's something very important to be found in boredom. There's something beautiful about it when you're utterly bored."

"You yourself have changed a lot since then," Yoshimi interjects, "so maybe you see boredom differently."

A kind of inner calm, perhaps? Yoshimi rebuffs this suggestion immediately. "No, It's not calmness," she giggles. "If he was calm then he really would be Mr Boring."

CALL ME GOD

To acknowledge the group's latest evolutionary change, Eye has decided to customise the group's name from The Boredoms to the more mystical sounding V∞rdoms. The decision apparently took a considerable time to formulate.

"Do you know what kotodama means?" he asks. I admit my ignorance, but luckily interpreter Alan Cummings is on hand to explain that kotodama is an ancient Japanese belief that words possess a mystical, self-realising power in the right circumstances.

"All of my group names, including The Boredoms, have a meaning," reveals Eye, explaining, "When we still spelt it with a B – now it's V – it linked to 'boa', the huge snake you find in South America. There was also the idea of 'bore' and boring, but primarily I think I wanted to access the power of the serpent and the power of the Earth.

"The idea of being bored was important too," he reiterates. "Like when you've caught a cold and you're feverish, you hear music in a very strange and mysterious way. I used to get like that a lot."

Amplifying his experience of how physical conditions affect perception, Eye has some very definite ideas about the relationship between musicians and audience, and how they should be positioned to play and hear this new music to best advantage. "I have a concept for the band now," he says, settling into his stride. "I don't think of it as a group, more as a kind of circuit, or a piece of equipment. Usually you think of a group as guitar, bass and drums all colliding, but I see the group as being like a record player. You can see that in the layout when we play. We weren't able to do it here last night, but usually when we play in Japan we set up in the middle of the venue, in a circle so we're facing each other. So the audience is all around us, and together we make up a huge circle." Apparently this human circle bears similarities to the traditional Japanese Bon Odori dance. At festivals throughout Japan in the middle of July, whole communities participate in circular dances to welcome the dead, who are believed to return to their old homes during this period. "We're all facing the centre of the circle," continues Eye, "and that's where the energy is concentrated. So it's different from watching TV."

"Concerts up till now have always been like watching TV," emphasises Yoshimi, "but this way the musicians and the audience are both focused on the centre point. We want it to be music that people can dance to. We want them to dance. When you're playing drums you want people to move their bodies."

Eye, it transpires, is thinking way beyond the established performer-audience relationship. His vision of V∞rdoms casts the group as the flesh and blood equivalent of a technologically advanced information receiver, plugged into a higher plane of cosmic consciousness. "Because we're facing each other, we're situated on diagonals, aren't we?" he elaborates, "and we can pick up information along these diagonals. Where the diagonals intersect, it's like this important source of information suddenly appears there and we can access or download it. In that sense it's like a database. I always want to connect to a higher energy, that's what I mean by a database – something I can access and download data from."

Elaborating his record player concept, Eye points out that the V in their name resembles a stylus, while the infinity symbol takes on the shape of two records. "We're the motor to the record player, and where our diagonals intersect is the hole in the record." "But we don't think about it when we're playing," interjects Yoshimi. "We try as hard as we can not to 'try'. We believe that if you don't play naturally then the record in the sky won't revolve. We put too much energy into it. When we're playing naturally and facing each other, it feels like the music flows really smoothly." His vision of V∞rdoms as a human Technics record deck, scratching the grooves of an enormous intergalactic record with the concentrated power of their music and audience is certainly astonishing. And it gets better.

"For me The Boredoms' music is like a really long email address," Eye enthuses. "It doesn't matter whether we're any good or whether we're crap, what matters is precision. If you make a mistake with a mail address then your message won't go to where it's supposed to. Make just one mistake and it's like you get crossed lines on the telephone. So The Boredoms are like a mail address for accessing this higher data, and at the same time it's like we call out and this higher form of energy appears."

DON'T FALL IN THE AUDIO HOLE

Partly hatched out of his obsession with records, Eye's human turntable theory also links to his parallel role as a DJ. As MC Hellshit, he teamed up with turntablist Otomo Yoshihide (aka DJ Carhouse) in 1995 for a Disobey event in Manchester; and as DJ Pica Pica Pica, he has released a CD of vinyl cut-ups, scratched edits and raw remixes that hark back to his earlier 'Boretronix' cassette recordings. But why is he so fascinated by the role of DJ? "Since I was a kid I've always been interested in the idea of making sounds using records," Eye replies. "When I first started making my own multitracked recordings, I'd use a tape deck and a record player. I'd put a big rock on the arm of the player, so it would play the same thing over and over, make up loops and ping-pong them back and forth. I've always been really interested in records as a medium, and in sound reproduction equipment. So when DJs first appeared I wanted to have a go myself."

The technical aspects of sound generation notwithstanding, Eye is also fascinated by the DJ's potential for creating an alternative identity. "I'm really interested in how putting 'DJ' in front of a word adds some special value to an action. You can do it with anything. You could be drinking coffee and become DJ Coffee," he laughs. "My fundamental reason for becoming a DJ, though, is the psychological satisfaction I get from seeing a round object revolving." Asked if he admires any DJs currently treading the club circuits, Eye cites sound artist Christian Marclay. "I remember seeing my first photograph of Marclay who was wearing a turntable like he was selling hot-dogs at a baseball game. Seeing that picture was exciting. He looks punk, the whole image. I thought that his *Record Without A Cover* was also hugely exciting. It's somebody doing something which hasn't been done before – how could you not be impressed?"

BOREDOMER IN BORETRIBE

Contact with contemporary Western musicians has been enormously beneficial in the development of The Boredoms, especially for Eye and Yoshimi, who have forged strong links with John Zorn and Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore and Kim Gordon. In October 1992 Zorn brought in producer Kazunori Sugiyama to oversee the recording of The Boredoms' fourth album, *Wow 2*, for his label Avant. After witnessing him at work, Zorn invited Eye to join his hardcore jazz orchestras Naked City and Painkiller. They have since recorded two albums together for the New Japan and Radical Jewish Culture sections of Zorn's Tzadik label.

"I think I met him in Japan," replies Eye, recalling his first contacts with Zorn. "I was playing in some band and John came along to watch us. We started talking and he said that we should do something. I then went to New York to do vocals for Naked City and things developed from there. One thing I noticed from working with Naked City was that if they were recording something and John noticed a mistake, he would stop everybody from playing and they would do it again until it was right. It was that idea of getting things precisely right [that intrigued me]." THe pair returned to the studio in 1995 to record *Nani Nani*, for which Zorn assumed the name Dekoboko Hajime. During the same session, they found enough time to record a short CD called *Zohar* as The Mystic Fugu Orchestra. Under the alias of Rav Tzizit, Zorn played harmonium over the pops and crackles of a 'found' LP of ancient Judaica recordings, with Eye, as Rav Yechida, supplying an accompanying vocal drone. "John was doing this Jewish music series on Tzadik and we wanted to do something that would fit into that idea," remembers Eye, "so we found an old record in some junk shop and played it, and this was the sound of that record. *Nani Nani* was recorded first, and when that was all finished we had some time left so we did this. It just came out very quickly, it wasn't thought over."

For Eye, working on this outwardly Jewish project

ABOVE: BOREDOMS ON STAGE AT ALL TOMORROW'S PARTIES, UCLA, LOS ANGELES, MARCH 2002

tapped into darker cultural resonances closer to home. Something about the music dredged up the long buried history of the Oomoto cult, a Japanese religious order claiming to possess visions of a new world order. The military-controlled government eventually banned the heavily persecuted cult in 1935. Several generations of Eye's family had belonged to the Oomoto movement; combined with Zorn's deep personal commitment to Jewish culture, the duo's shared memories of grief made them especially close. The music resulting from these sessions is at once mystical and marvellous.

The Zorn connection led to The Boredoms being booked as support for a Stateside Sonic Youth tour. When it was over, Thurston Moore followed Zorn's lead and lured Eye into the studio to record together on various projects for his Ecstatic Peace! label, some of which are still in the can awaiting release.

"I like the way that Sonic Youth's sound is very similar to the Glenn Branca guitar orchestra project he was doing with guitars with different tunings," comments Eye, about his experiences touring with Sonic Youth. "Where he was creating music that was both contemporary composition and rock 'n' roll at the same time. That was something that was very important to me. I never really wanted to just play rock as it was, even though as a group it does have that rock structure to it. I've never been able to play pre-existing rock and I've always wanted to do something else.

"When you play like that you begin to hear new sounds coming from beyond the sympathetic resonances and overtones," he continues, "like voices, or melodies you've never heard before. The more you listen, the more you hear. I'm really interested in that phenomenon. That was something I learnt from Glenn Branca and Sonic Youth." During the same 1992 Sonic Youth tour, Yoshimi was herded into the studio by Kim Gordon to play drums and trumpet for her and ex-Pussy Galore guitarist Julie Cafritz's Grrrl Power punk trio Kitten (later renamed Free Kitten). Smiling at the memory, Yoshimi recalls, "Kim, who I didn't know at the time, told me that this was going to be a group called Kitten, and at first I thought she said Kitchen! It was a very long time before I knew this was going to be a group with Kim and Julie. Then Mark [Ibold] from Pavement joined and we toured, but Julie has been too busy recently so the band haven't done anything."

WE NEVER SLEEP

"What we also learned was that we shouldn't eat junk food, and eating really great food is a source of energy in itself," asserts Eye, discussing how his ideas about music making had changed during this period. "We realised that you couldn't actually continue to make great music by eating instant ramen."

Their experiences with Zorn and Sonic Youth left members of The Boredoms hungry for fresh opportunities to play with different musicians. In 1994 Eye, Yoshimi and guitarist Yamamoto took part in a televised concert for NHK (the Japanese equivalent of the BBC) called *Video Opera*. Other names participants included New York avant garde dancer Simone Forti, Fluxus artist Nam June Paik and his fellow Fluxus musician Takehisa Kosugi, of Taj Mahal Travellers fame. In the end, it was never broadcast, but The Boredoms appreciated the company. Similar to Sonic Youth's later *Goodbye 20th Century* project – the group's homage to the century's avant garde pioneers – The Boredoms' participation in *Video Opera* revealed them to be adept at mastering the intricacies of a Fluxus performance, what with Eye bouncing out the tempo for Yamamoto and Yoshimi with a rubber ball. The most impressive aspect of the performance was the trio's natural ability to communicate with each other. "The communication works best when it's natural, on full force and people aren't thinking about anything," confirms Eye. "When you're on that level of communication they know instinctively where the sound should be directed. It's only when you're thinking too hard that unnecessary communication methods have to be used to get back to where we should be.

"For me, music is more about listening than producing a sound myself. I'm not a musician. I can press a button or I can scream, but the most musical thing I can do is listen."

It has now been three years since The Boredoms released the mind-altering masterwork *Vision Creation Newsun* (Birdman). The group underwent a considerable metamorphosis since its release, which has left them feeling somewhat detached from it.

"We think that *Vision Creation Newsun* is now over and belongs in the past," retorts Eye, "because it's ceased being a collision." Both Eye and Yoshimi prefer to look straight ahead and concentrate on finding some way to release the hours of new material they have recorded since the completion of the *Vision Creation Newsun* period. "I've got lots of other groups, so I'd like to release something by them," hints Eye teasingly. "But we've recorded some Voredoms stuff too. We recorded at the beach, lined up three drum kits at the water's edge so the waves would hit the bass drums."

"It was like field recording," enthuses Yoshimi. "We'd set up mics in the waves to record the drums."

"Underwater mics, recording the drums in the water," continues Eye. "I wanted to record the movement. So we'd be moving the mics around as we were playing. Someone would be on the beach, someone else would be playing in the sea. We'd swing the mic right up close to the drums. We were recording like that all last year. We got this huge gun mic, like a corncob, and had eight people moving it around as we were recording. We had one of those big cars that have a digital mixing studio built into them down at the beach with us. We got some great sounds. I'd like to edit those recordings and put them out. It cost us so much to record that we've got to release it."

Though he has done his utmost to stifle any giveaway signs, it becomes evident that Eye stayed up all night following the concert, and he's beginning to succumb to his desire for sleep. It's not the most auspicious moment to ask him about the new found precision presently dominating The Boredoms' music. "But surely everyone wants to be able to reproduce their vision, their tastes as precisely and closely as possible?" he insists. "The stuff you have in your head! I can't write music, so I can't use the same methods, but precision is still important. It's a bit like when you go to a shrine in Japan, and you're supposed to bow twice, and each one should be a different depth. It'd be wrong if you bowed three times. It doesn't matter if the form isn't perfect, but you need to do it twice – and the same with the depth, even if it's not perfect it's got to be one deep and one shallow. If it's not, then it's meaningless. That's the kind of precision I'm talking about," he pauses a moment, before concluding, "I thought about learning how to write down my vision, but I just couldn't do it." *Boredoms online: www.ottawa-anime.org/~eyevocal/boredoms, www.boredoms.co.uk*

SELECTED BOREDOMS DISCOGRAPHY

Eye candy: Sleeve artwork for *Wow 2*, *Super æ*, UFO Or Die's *Cassettetape Superstar*, *Shock City Shockers* compilation and *Onanie Bomb Meets The Sex Pistols* discs

THE BOREDOMS
ANAL BY ANAL EP
TRANSRECORDS 7"/SSE COMMUNICATIONS PRODUCTS 1986/1993

ONANIE BOMB MEETS THE SEX PISTOLS
SELFISH LP/WEA JAPAN/EARTHNOISE 1988

These early Boredoms recordings feature Eye screaming at the top of his voice in a bid to free himself from the shackles of his Hanatarashi persona and front a full-on rock unit. Here the group's hardcore punk roots are allowed to show, with a set of anarchic chic anthems that are both threatening and hilarious. The complete *Anal By Anal* EP and a bonus song bring the CD up to a more respectable length.

MICHIDAI/FUANTEIDAI
PUBLIC BATH 7" 1990

As the paper insert clearly warns: "This tape was stolen from The Boredoms' secret recording sessions for the Boretronix cassette releases. As a consequence, microphone and tape hill, amplifier buzz, and record surface noise are all an organic part of your listening experience." For rabid completists only.

SOUL DISCHARGE 99
SELFISH LP/SHIMMY DISC EUROPE/EARTHNOISE 1989

The group's Funkadelically charged second album was reportedly inspired by the titles of various disco records and Talking Heads' *Talking Heads 77* debut. "Discharge", explains Eye, is "like soulful music at the end of the century." Both the Shimmy Disc and Earthnoise CDs contain archive Eye/Boredoms recordings from 1982-87.

WOW 2
AVANT 1992

The punk rock/dislocated disco direction continues under the watchful eye of producer John Zorn. Only here it's at once more advanced and refined, with Yoshimi's trumpet adding interplanetary Don Cherry stylings to the proceedings.

POP TATARI
WEA JAPAN/REPRISE 1992

CHOCOLATE SYNTHESIZER
WEA JAPAN/REPRISE 1995

Signing to a major label landed The Boredoms with a larger and more receptive audience, which was consolidated by their participation in 1994's Lollapalooza. For their new fanbase, this pair of records amounts to an 'access all areas' pass into the wild and wonky world of The Boredoms. Preceding the *Wow 2* album they recorded with John Zorn, *Pop Tatari* cemented their reputation as one of the world's most original and daring acts, as they pulled rock to pieces and stapled it together again in drastically different shapes. Compounded from Eye and Yoshikawa's insane vocal gymnastics, the metronomic drum attack of Yoshimi and ATR, Yamamoto's relentless raygun guitar blast and the awesome, if somewhat inaudible binding presence of dancer God Mama (check the accompanying booklet), *Pop Tatari* is a beautiful, scary mess that works.

Even better is the later *Chocolate Synthesizer*. Sounding like they're in total harmony with each other, the group are unstoppable. On *Chocolate Synthesizer*, the chaos raging through *Pop Tatari* is embraced, disciplined, focused and amplified.

SUPER ROOTS 1-8
WEA JAPAN 1993-99

Super Roots is the series of musical sketchbooks which allowed The Boredoms the freedom to exhibit various works in progress to their audience. Consisting of seven volumes to date – there's no volume four, because the number is associated with death in Japan – two *Super Roots* records are of particular importance. On *5*, the guitar, bass and cymbals are trapped in a whirlpool crescendo that is gradually subdued, only to immediately start up again from the top. "It's like the ending or the high point in old psychedelic music repeated over and over," explains Eye, "an endless climax." Yoshimi claims that *Super Roots 5* is "probably the band's biggest turning point".

Asked to recommend a single Boredoms record as a way in to their music, Eye proposes, "On *Super Roots 8* there's a cover of "Jungle Taitai", which is a theme song to an animated series about a lion in the jungle by Osama Tezuka, the Japanese manga artist (allegedly the uncredited source for Disney's *The Lion King*). That's our favourite, the best place to start."

SUPER GO!!!!!
WEA JAPAN 1998

SUPER Æ
WEA JAPAN/BIRDMAN 1998

Both *Super Go!!!!!* and *Super æ* (pronounced Are) are the blueprints for the rising *Vision Creation Newsun* project which would take The Boredoms a year to complete. They give advance notice of its attractions on these two records, over which their new direction breaks like a glorious dawn. The stunning *Super æ* leaves the deepest impression, as the group ingeniously splice together a musical collage from frazzled acid tape reeling, cosmic Krautrock rumble and stuttering CD burnout in a mindfuck guaranteed to topple the collective brain of their audience clean off its axis.

VISION CREATION NEWSUN
WEA JAPAN 2000

The *Vision Creation Newsun* project began in 1999 with the release of a boxed deluxe double CD collector's edition that included a sticker, a T-shirt and an electronic device that emitted a 40 second frog sample when exposed to light. They followed it the same year with an EP called *Suncidal Cendencies*, featuring alternate versions and remixes of *Newsun* material; and in 2000 they made a domestic version available with the same track listing as the box. The solar cover shot, starring Boredoms manager Junko's baby daughter Nana, was taken by Yoshimi. "It was taken at Salt Lake during an eclipse at nine o'clock at night," she explains, "but it looked like the baby and the sun were in perfect communication."

VCN finds The Boredoms teetering at the edge of a raging psychedelic volcano, and they're the only ones with the power to prevent it erupting into total chaos. It will stand as The Boredoms' masterpiece for years to come.

REBORE 0: VISION RECREATION
WEA JAPAN 2001

Eye's energetic reworking of the *Newsun* material is the cherry topping the project. It is also the best of the uneven *Rebore* series, where guest musicians UNKLE, Ken Ishii and DJ Krush were each invited to make an album by trawling through and remixing The Boredoms' back catalogue. The results were timid, to say the least, and you can't help wishing that Eye's preferred choices of John Oswald and Merzbow were given the commissions. But Eye's own remix brings the house down with its elongated rhythmic earthquake looping one aftershock after another to tremendous effect.

SIDE PROJECTS/SOLO WORK

HANATARASH
HANATARASH 4: AIDS-A-DELIC
PUBLIC BATH 1991

These 'Boretronix'-style screaming noise mixes from Eye's bedroom studio were recorded in a day on a broken cassette recorder. To experience his earlier Hanatarashi project live, you'll have to search out their three CDs, which were initially released by Mom 'n' Dad Productions. Somewhat mysteriously, these have been further fleshed out (or "discraped") with creaky, crazed selections from old exotica and Hugo Montenegro LPs.

UFO OR DIE
CASSETTETAPE SUPERSTAR
TIMEBOMB PUBLIC BATH 1993

Before they mutated into UFO Or Die (Unlimited Freak Out Or Die), this pre-Boredoms trio featuring Yoshimi on drums, Eye on vocals and former Leningrad Blues Machine bass guitarist Naoto Hayashi were previously known as Hasty Snail Baby. Eye also contributes frenzied guitar to a record that comes close to capturing the original intention of combining elements of DNA style No Wave and the infantilism of Happy Flowers. On *Cassettape Superstar*, they exercise the punky playfulness and love of naive noisemaking that will later characterise The Boredoms' embryonic recordings.

PUZZLE PUNKS
PIPELINE
UWAJIMA CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM 1996

Subtitled *24 Smash Hits By Punk Puzzle Bands*, this gallery project features Eye and fellow noise artist Shinro Ohtake rebounding off each other on a variety of real and toy instruments to produce a collage of rock, fractured jazz and weird vibrations that slowly leaks seductive charm. The accompanying book features art from both Puzzle Punks, allowing a rare glimpse of Eye's Basquiat-like paintings and sculpture.

DESTROY 2
WE ARE VOICE AND RHYTHM ONLY
JAPAN OVERSEAS 1996

The name and title tell you all you need to know about Eye and percussionist Hasegawa Chu's 3" CD, upon which they scream and pound their way through 48 short bursts of hardcore noise threat. To the bemusement of their mildly stunned audience, Eye signs off each song with a yelped *"FUCK YOU!"*.

VARIOUS
SHOCK CITY SHOCKERS
SHOCK CITY POLYSTAR 1998

The Boredoms' beautifully packaged mixed bag of side projects drifts from gamelan and sitar drone to full-on psychedelic trance/free jazz drum 'n' bass. Recorded two years before *Vision Creation Newsun*, the sampler sends up starbust signals of exhilarating trips ahead, all of them since come to pass.

OOIOO
FEATHER FLOAT
POLYSTAR/SHOCK CITY/BIRDMAN 1999

Yoshimi's all-girl trio (pronounced oh oh eye oh oh) is not so much a Boredoms side project as a fully fledged group in their own right. Formed, says Yoshimi, as her vehicle for playing guitar, the trio also includes player Kyoko and drummer Yoshiko, both of them doubling up on a variety of instruments. On their second album *Feather Float*, they bond together on a powerful and enchanting 'pop Ambient with attitude' groove, complete with sampled birdsong.

NOISE RAMONES
ROCKET TO DNA
DUAL PLOVER 2000

Named after the opening track on *Pop Tatari*, Yamataka Eye's umpteenth project Noise Ramones launch an addictive Suicide meets Neu! noise attack incorporating a discreet nod to his first project Hanatarashi and a deep bow to Merzbow.

PHOTOS (OPPOSITE) DIANNE JONES

The Primer

***The Wire*'s bimonthly guide to the essential recordings of a selected artist or genre. This month: In the mid- to late 80s, as HipHop went overground, a bunch of Florida dance producers stacked up their woofers and dished up a raunchy, bottom-end alternative. Dave Tompkins is your MC through the quips and quad-ditties of Miami Bass. Illustration: Savage Pencil**

Two guys in spacesuits, too many Debbie Debs and too little boom. That was the considered assessment of David Hobbs (aka Mr Mixx), as he watched the choreographed electro group Freestyle performing on a Miami stage back in 1986. When he lived in California, the 2 Live Crew DJ was a fan of Freestyle's producer 'Pretty' Tony Butler, even though the latter's stock keyboard sound was intended more for the clubs than the projects. Although his records remained firmly electro, and even if Mixx believed his mix needed fixin', Pretty Tony was one of the pioneers of Miami Bass: his jams, such as 1983's "Freestyle Express" and 1984's "Jam The Box", helped define the South Florida booty music aesthetic.

The preponderance of thongs on South Beach made booty inevitable, but Dade County's obsession with the bottom end didn't really start until "Planet Rock". Afrika Bambaataa, Arthur Baker and John Robie's jerry-rigged Kraftwerk jalopy cruised down the I-95 autobahn from New York in 1982. Chic's debut single, 1977's "Dance, Dance, Dance", was the first record to use sub-bass (frequencies below 60 Hz that were usually removed during mastering) to achieve a speaker- and body-rumbling sound, but the fluid pulses and plastic caverns that Bam and crew fashioned from the 808 drum machine really dropped the Boom. The ability to make such a huge sound from such a cheap piece of equipment undoubtedly connected with producers stranded below the Mason-Dixon Line, far from HipHop's centre of power, with hayseed accents that were routinely lampooned up in the Big Apple. These producers were also well versed in the primordial drum box loops constructed by Miami's own Timmy Thomas in the early 70s, and grew up listening to DJs rocking Kraftwerk in the groves and parking lots in the mid- to late 70s. All of this combined with Miami's tradition of ribaldry (the original X-rated rapper Clarence 'Blowfly' Reid still lives with his mother there) to create the late 20th century's very own musical *Satyricon*: Miami Bass.

Along with Maggotron's developing P-Funk inspired universe, Pretty Tony's records pushed Dade County electro out of the "Planet Rock" footwork and costume-keyboard rut. Tony's label, Music Specialists, was licensed through Sunnyview Records, a New York electro label full of spacesuits and Planet Rockers, most notably Newcleus. Sunnyview also distributed Krush 2's "Ghetto Jump" (1985), a banjo-electro record originally released on Nezz Records by a promoter named Luke Skyywalker.

In the mid-80s, everybody did the ghetto jump at Pac Jam, the central Miami skate rink operated by Skyywalker and named after an evil electro song by another Florida spaceman, Michael Jonzun. Pretty Tony got a lot of airplay at Pac Jam, especially "Fix It In The Mix", a B-boy classic that, from the outside, looks like another Kraftwerk/Bambaataa mutant. Zoom in closer, though, and sound is sucked into a small bottle, a rock is tossed through the window and breaks the bottle letting in sheets of cricket breath; a robot tells you how to dance while shooting lasers at your feet. Chipmunk tech support reports problems on all channels in all frequencies until one critter says, *"I'm trying to maintain proper stabilisation on this channel without creating a situation of over-modulation"*.

Those guys had their spacesuits, but Mixx and Luke preferred birthday suits. They wanted more overt modulation, more bass, less Buck Rogers, more bang for the buck. Mixx wanted the woofers to kick out hot pants, but Pretty Tony's heavy breathing was more ten speed than ear bleed. For the bigger the bass, the bigger the bottom and you all know how the story goes. Mixx was shocked that producers like Pretty Tony would clip the 808 before the bass could finish its thought. "People wouldn't open up the decay on the 808," Mixx says. "So it wouldn't make the BOOM sound. It'd just thump, instead of boom."

There is another side of Bass's glut of glut-obsessed songs, and proof that you can lower the boom without lowering the bar. It's not all 'Planet Rock' in a jockstrap: there's the kerb-detector hi-hat of creep Bass, such as 2 Live's "Ghetto Bass" ticking at half the speed of its A-side, "Throw The D". That giant biohazard cylinder in the hatchback is a bazooka amp, which would make techno-bass become quad.

"Quad is just some slang shit for bass," laughs Mr Mixx. "Comin' from four speakers." Except South Florida's bass battles would stack up to 48 speakers. The tweeters were seriously outnumbered, like the shrivelled retirees were to the Castro refugees who helped bring speed and the salsa boom to Miami.

T LA ROCK & JAZZY JAY
"IT'S YOURS"

DEF JAM/STREETWISE PT104 12" 1983

As Bambaataa's "Planet Rock" had already proved, the bowels of Bass are located New York, and so it is with the record that not only gave a kick in the ass to the quad squad, but kickstarted HipHop's biggest empire, Def Jam. According to Jazzy Jay, he and co-producer Rick Rubin ran outside to his Caprice Classic to test out the bass levels during the recording of this 808 classic. Back in the studio, some very young Beastie Boys were drunk on a special party mix of their *Licensed To Ill* track "Brass Monkey" (provided by Jazzy Jay, who scratches throughout the whole damn thing), so their *"hooo"* crowd support was tweaked into backwards barnyard brays. T La Rock stepped in, said smart stuff like, *"Common talk deserves a walk"*, and thought nothing of it until one day he heard it on the radio while filling orders at a pharmacy. Co-written with T La Rock's brother and Treacherous Three member Special K, "It's Yours" made everybody want to put big words on their buckles. If Kool Keith hadn't heard it, the planet would be a far more boring place. Tony Rock samples it on his Bass pride song "Still Doin' It". The line, of course, is *"Back to the beat"*.

MC ADE
"HIT HARDER" FROM HOW MUCH CAN YOU TAKE

4 SIGHT FS26 LP 1988

MC PLAYER
RHYMIN' RAMPAGE/THE KID'S A WIZARD

4 SIGHT FS68719 12" 1987

GIGOLO TONY
"HE IS DJ CRASH" FROM AIN'T IT GOOD TO YA

4 SIGHT FS25 LP 1989

Many experts regard Adrian 'ADE' Hines's "Bass Rock Express" (1985) as the first Miami Bass record because it was the first time those two words got hitched in the blurry eyes of quad. So ADE's father, Billy Hines, started releasing early tracks by Maggotron and Shy D on his 4-Sight label. While 2 Live Crew's Amazing Vee claimed to dominate both sides of the equator, MC ADE actually did it. "Bass Mechanic" (1986) was bootlegged and remixed throughout South America, as the teenager performed it for Brazilian soccer stadiums and a talk show hosted by Pele's wife. With the help of engineer Frank Cornelius, ADE somehow retained his mossy drawl despite the vocoder's efforts to destroy it. (Think of a tracheotomy patient talking through a burp with a coffee tin over his head.) The drawl quickens on ADE's single "Transformer", while on "Hit Harder", ADE leaves his vocoder and DJ at the carwash and goes on a gangster creep: *"You might not see me on the stroll but how you think the stroll came to be? Hmm... ADE"*. The bass, the heaviest of ADE's illustrious career, is the slow tumbling cousin to the Beastie boing of the "AWOL" section of "B-Boy Bouillabaisse" (on *Paul's Boutique*). The snare is a leather Gucci slipper whapping a mutant wood roach crawling on the dashboard while ADE is *"Ridin' round town in my slippers and robe"*. Eightball and MJG later paid tribute with "Pimp Hard", though its screwed version couldn't even get out of bed.

MC Player's "Rhymin Rampage" is by far the sickest lyrical track out of Florida and could hang with LL's Def Jam Tour jacket. The *"psychopath of paragraphs"*, Jacksonville's Player is full of words and knows how to use them, fast. *"High velocity snare prefaced by death bass"* – that'll turn your town to toothpicks. Nobody saw this coming: *"The future of your face, psychically unforeseen, cold dissed by my fist, totally debrained"*. DJ Kid Wizzard flies in some 1979 keyboards courtesy of Pleasure, grafting disco funk flesh to the 808 steel. "The Kid's A Wizard" should be the global supplier of

verbal ammo for DMC battles (*"cutcapades"*!) and Clive Barker viscera (*"tongue tissue rupture"*!). Turn on the kitchen fan (*"Electrifyin' final fryin' smell the virtual rot of the mislaid decayed duck DJ"*) and leave the dishes (*"The abrasion's like that of a Brillo pad, egad!"*), because Player is nastier than Larry Fishburne's fade haircut in the 1986 drugs 'n' delinquents movie *Band Of The Hand*. His second single, "Heavy Meta Mic Maniac", continues the smear campaign, sending hookers *"running faster than Tammy Bakker's mascara"* The Bon Jovi hook is corny but clever in how it cites JJ Fad, the *"Phyllis Diller dames"*, for giving rap a bad name.

A former nightclub bouncer, Gigolo Tony was best known for 1986's "Smurf Rock", where he sings about *"Mamas hangin' out clothes"* to a *Twilight Zone* melody. Endorsed by DJ Shadow in *Endtroducing*'s liner notes as "the ultimate edit track", "He Is DJ Crash" earns an extremely high torque rating, a good reason to find Gigolo Tony's second album, *Ain't It Good To Ya*. Crash cuts on tables and tape as if he mistook the reel for a turntable and got sucked in Beats dart diagonally through Kraftwerk's "Numbers" syncopation like a water bug dodging bullets in stab algae. If you've ever been shot at while flapping underwater in your Gillman suit, then the stop-drag stabs of *"pshew!"* will sound familiar He even tone bends the details of the 808 bell, taken for granted in electro rhythms, and gets to act out melodic fantasies like a drummer that wants to be lead singer

VARIOUS
SKYYWALKER'S BASS WAVES MEGA MIXES
SKYYWALKER GR111 12" 1987

LE JUAN LOVE
MY HARDCORE RHYMES
SKYYWALKER GR110 12" 1987

While the rest of the New York scene continued to snub Miami, one of the city's premier edit remixers, Chep Nunez, took his blade to the Glades and made alligator souffle out of Luke Skyywalker's catalogue on *Bass Waves Mega Mixes*. It was Mr Mixx's idea, impressed with Nunez's work throughout Mantronix's second album, *Music Madness* Like Mixx, Nunez had an affinity for dancefloor torque, so the edit king was given splicense to kill it, starting with 2 Live Crew's crawling anthem "Ghetto Bass", a tribute to Skyywalker's pioneering crew, Ghetto Style DJs. Nunez then has it out with a time-out buzzer, an 808 bell and a single Kraftwerk huff. The bass echo is truncated with slivers of silence, precisely measured with the tools of the profession, razor and ruler. Also included is the instrumental classic "Miami", the B-side of Anquette's kinda feminist answer to "Throw The D", "Throw The P". Under an airplane headed for Cuba, you hear pirate radio DJ Steve Grey yelling, *"Miiiiiami!"*. Grey had set up his transmitter on Miami Beach, not far from Georges, the Colombian who repaired Skyywalker's blown amps every week Luke's Ghetto Style DJs would erect their own transmitter in the Liberty City Projects, allowing Z list rappers to spit. Luckily for us, Nunez spends little time on these and moves on to Atlanta's MC Shy-D, who has "Gotta Be Tough" to compensate for his squeaky Dobie Gillis voice. Earth, Wind & Fire's "Brazilian Song" – just a sampled bystander on the Shy-D track - gets machine-gunned by Nunez, sounding similar to a CD skipping and emerging with a scratch. Shy D then says, *"I'mout because my throat is sore"*. Nor does Miami funk legend Herman Kelley get to finish a note, already cut up by Mr Mixx on 2 Live Crew's "Throw The D". ("Throw The D" was actually recorded in California as a Miami tribute. 2 Live, without Skyywalker at the time, realised West Coast electro was severely boom-deficient and moved east to Florida.

With the remarkable success of 2 Live Crew, Luke became Bass's biggest entrepreneur. Perhaps the only pure MC and conscientious student on the Skyywalker roster was Aliapattah Junior High's Juan Biggers, aka Le Juan Love. Not too many kids can be hardcore while bragging about being teacher's pet, but LJL is no apple shiner. He walks to school *"like a hurricane"*, makes *"your intestines itch"*, falls asleep during his college entrance exams only to wake up spitting the golden drool: *"I'm an adjective/I live to modify"*. With respect to Marley Marl's work on Kool G Rap's "It's A Demo", Mr Mixx tricks out 'Funky Drummer", hammering horseshoes to the Big Loop and even inviting its neglected breakdown to the party. And this is 1987, before the classic break went on autopilot. Mixx said he wanted the snare to sound like the drum machine, while other beat makers at the time wanted their equipment to act human. The B-side, "Everybody Say Yeah", was Le Juan's hit even though a cheesy rock guitar turns Little Stevie into "Smoke On The Water".

THE MIX CREW
BLACK LEATHER/I'LL JAMMY/NICE GIGGIN'
JAMMIN JIM NO NUMBER 12" 1987

With fearful respect to Dynamix II's "Purple Beats" (see below), this complete obscurity is the food of the quads. No area code or address are given, but the label's beach towel colour scheme (scalding pink) leads to the inevitable conclusion. To boot, the cover photo describes them in tassled leather jackets and frondy Jooba pants, not Jams. "I'll Jammy" should read "Ill Jammy" and the double Ls remind you of a certain braggart from Queens. MC Nice pulls a gun on a dude who tries to pull his girl, sees that he's high, lets him live and dude apologises. Nice. Mosquitoes are bloated like Orange Bowl blimps because they're full of Mix Crew bass. The 808 on "Nice Giggin'" is a water sprinkler set at 'helicopter' as the "tsst" whirrs like tsetse fly wings. As he chases rhythms upwards of 130 bpm, Nice beatboxes so fast he needs Chapstick 'Em.

DJ BATTLECAT
DJ N-EFFECT
TECHNO KUT TK1203 12" 1988

TOO $HORT
I AIN'T TRIPPIN'
LIVE 1232 12" 1988

SIR MIX-A-LOT
POSSE ON BROADWAY
NASTYMIX IGU76794 12" 1987

While naturally more cosmetically enhanced than the moons over Miami, the SoCal sunshine (and some cranky geographic plates) shook booties too. *The Posse 2* compilation (Macola) debuted Digital Underground and included Ice-T, Fila Fresh Crew (The DOC), NWA and 2 Live Crew's first single. Tinny and menacing, 2 Live's "The Revelation" and everything else on the comp was outbassed by "DJ N-Effect", an offbeat quaditty by Crenshaw's DJ Battlecat. The West Coast was really sniffing the paste back then, as Dr Dre and Unknown DJ each made a trunkload of bootleg mixes under names like Mix Tricks and New York Scratchmasters When Dre programmed The Sleeze Boyz' still relevant "Dance Til You Drop", his former World Class Wreckin Cru partner Lonzo Williams dropped Battlecat's first single, "DJ N-Effect" The title of each version makes the distinction between 'cut' and 'scratch', so you know this is serious Battlecat's "Cut & Scratched Version" looked eastwards, using an LL Cool J line (*"I don't think so"*) to smite JJ Fad while making fingerfood from a caterwaul. But all the whooptie whoop is for the "Cut N Drums" version, minimal like DJ Battery Brain and Knights Of The Turntable (both Cali essentials), but more disjointed and tribal, with double dribbling cowbells that rile up dead space in their wake. On Battlecat's breakdown, the cowclunk gets melodically pitched to a handclap echo; the bass is deep enough to hum; and you can barely detect a vocoder clearing its throat at the beginning.

Up in the Bay, Too $hort's DJ (Universe) made the uptempo "Alias Crazy Rak", in which a drum machine gets loose in its stone boots Meanwhile, the Invisibl Skratch Piklz were scarring $hort's "Dope Fiend Beat", an East Oakland anthem slower than overheated dog drool. The Too $hort/Miami connection is deeper than the "beeyyyotch" misogyny for which they're known. "I Ain't Trippin'" saunters to a lazy low keyboard and bass that makes waves part in the air. $hort's T-shirt and khaki flow is so 'in the pocket' that his pants drag lower than his bumper, full of mint (self-)made from lint. *"I was ridin' the bus one day/Next day I was on the gas"*. No smarmy car audio salesman should be caught without it.

Nor should any kid be caught without knowing every word to Sir Mix-A-Lot's "Posse On Broadway", a *"muffler draggin'"* creeper slightly less bizarre than Mix A-Lot's superb "Square Dance Rap". It began one Seattle day when Mix-A-Lot was watching *Godzilla*. He wanted to sample the oafish lizard, but the monster's roar wouldn't sound good from the TV, so he put his mouth to a harmoniser and made the damn thing himself. Although it sounded like The Penguin taking a grunt, it will always be "Posse On Broadway" in our quad chambered hearts. Maybe auto hydraulic systems were created just so that rides could raise up and clear the bass, as Mix and crew roll through Seattle in a black Benz limo, the same one pictured on the cover of his "I'm A Trip" single, where Mix is standing in the sunroof zapping a pedestrian. Mix-A-Lot is one of the few who regarded drum machines as drum computers, and his effects weren't store-bought like so much electro at the time. With "Posse", Mix loses the corny, phone sex flow of earlier records and rhymes through the nose in a syncopated mock. There's the ultimate insult (*"We've got a dope posse, you've got a bunch of dudes"*), the ultimate word (*"swass"*, the Northwest equivalent of bugging) and the ultimate status report from a NASCAR crew chief (*"We're getting good grip from the 50 series tires"*). With "Posse" and a speed drill called "Rippin'", people thought Mix was from Miami, where not surprisingly he sold the most records.

DJ JEALOUS J VS JOCK D
PARTY TIME/DJ WARS/SCRATCH PAD
CUT IT UP DEF CD505 12" 1988

With the driller killer edits and a bassline that creeps as fast as Michael Myers, the Cut It Up Def logo really earns its name and buzzsaw outline on this Bass classic. Drawn beneath the saw (and impervious to it) is an acute stick figure on some turntable scales. It's easy to see why turntablists went nubby studying the Cut It Up Def catalogue of this West Palm Beach label (Jock D's "Let Your Body Rock", Latin & Lethal's "Cuties (We Got 'Em)", etc). "DJ Wars" chops up Egyptian Lover's pants into a fabric sale flurry and previously unheard of 64th note snare rolls get flattened into buzzers. Of course, Maggotron does a few fly-bys for history's sake. "Scratch Pad" is 17 a cappella seconds going on one, using Hashim to repeatedly emphasise there is an "I" in time. A whistle is cut into chirps, before Majick Marker squeaks. On "DJ Wars 2," Jock D samples some live Grandmixer D.St record, allegedly from the Budweiser Concert Hour.

MIAMI BASS BOOTY. TOP ROW: SLEEVE/LABEL ARTWORK FOR LE JUAN LOVE; MAGGOTRON, MISSY MIST, 'PRETTY' TONY BUTLER; BOTTOM ROW: ERIC GRIFFIN AKA SPEAKERHEAD, DYNAMIX II, THE MIX CREW, MC ADE

TONY ROCK
STREET RESIDENT
SKYYWALKER/EFFECT E704 12" 1988

The biggest selling Bass single ever, Tag Team's "Whoomp! There It Is" hailed from Atlanta, Bass's second raunch pad. Hotlanta's love affair with bottom probably started with Tony Rock's blend of the street and the beach. Brought to Skyywalker by Atlanta's other Bass celeb, MC Shy-D, Tony Rock sounds more like a lyricist than someone hanging out in the studio trying to get laid. His first single, 1987's "Still Doin It", teases New York (*"You can't survive at the bottom"*), while on "She Put Me In A Trance", producer Mike Fresh gave "Looking For The Perfect Beat" a welcoming whoomp to the South. "Street Resident" goes deeper, as Mr Mixx finds an unbitten Queen bassline that would make cabinets cough dustbowls It's an unglamorous street narrative – Rock's posture is beaten to the shape of the cardboard box that he calls home. Discharged from the army, he looks for pigeons to roast and combats the jingle of purses in his head. Reagan isn't helping matters, and Rock doesn't want to be a data technician so he finds a gun and says, *"Let's get some food in our gut"*. The robbery is botched and Rock gets locked up, but *"at least I have food and a place to stay"*. Proceeds went to Miami's Camillus Shelter, one of several Tony Rock philanthropy projects that also included little league baseball. This kept him from touring with 2 Live, so somebody else had to be in charge of inflating the giant dildo.

MISSY MIST
GETTIN' BASS
NEVER STOP NS1111 12" 1989

SPEAKERHEAD
THE ADVENTURES OF SPEAKERHEAD
NEVER STOP NS1112 12" 1989

MAGNETIC FORCE
UNORTHODOXISM FROM 12-52-365
JR/JOEY BOY JR2002 LP 1989

LADI LUV
GOOD TO THE LAST DUB
JOEY BOY JB5023 12" 1989

"A while ago nobody would've thought bass records could be sold abroad". That's Betty Boop sound alike Missy Mist – who's best-known for the Archie Bell & The Drells-sampling "Make It Mellow" and who would later succumb to the inevitable and record a Bass version of "Yellow Polka Dot Bikini" - imitating today's record dealers scratching their heads as the booty stock is shipped to Germany by the U boatload. Missy Mist knows the feeling but also *"knows good bass because I know how it feels"*. For the provocative "Dancetramental" on her *Gettin' Bass* EP, producer Eric Griffin pulls out the cowbell and edits with a whiplash. Griffin, a subterranean presence on the Miami scene since making "Rock It Baby" as P-Man in 1982, was the beat-programming wiz at the On Top and Never Stop labels and produced many Bass classics – Dynamix II's "Just Give The DJ A Break", Dimples Tee's "Jealous Fellas", Worse 'Em's "Triple M Bass" until he was tragically murdered. Under the name Speakerhead, Griffin sped up Go-Go, making the percussion go bonkers. He also collaborated with Joey Boy saviour Calvin Mills to give Miami Boyz their best beat, the clavinet timbale funk of "Hype Jam".

In its early days the Joey Boy label churned out some tawdry freestyle and dire mixes of disco standards. Then Calvin and Carlton Mills (aka Rock Force) showed up and turned the label into a Bass titan. Later, the Magnetic Force trio performed genre reassignment surgery on Bass. Last year, for about a week, you could search for Magnetic Force on eBay and turn up a purple and teal *Cosby Show* sweater by the same name, even uglier than the Baltodoro sweater vests rocked by Magnetic Force on the cover of their album. But clothes don't make the beats and "Unorthodoxism" violated club dress codes. Magnetic Force state: *"According to Chapter Three, Verse 12, Paragraph Four, Section Six of the Laws of Unorthodoxism, it clearly states that I can do anything"*. They get an extra umbrella in their drinks for getting some use out of Earth, Wind & Fire's wack 80s single, "Magnetic". Over a backwards guitar, Prince LJ criticises James Brown poachers as *"Polaroid photographers who want to marry an idea for years and years"*, followed by a weird disco dog whelp Then Miami Bass meets Liquid Liquid: 45 seconds of fast rap over 808 and marimba (or something wood and watery, anyway).

A rippled strand of 2" tape forms the 'Luv' in Ladi Luv's logo, barely legible cursive that's partially woofed by the reel to reel Appropriately, "Good To The Last Dub" gargles the lyrics to the Georgia rapper's A-side, "Good To The Last Drop". Anagrammatised by Magnetic Force, Ladi's *"lyric footnotes and bass notes"* become *"crily stoofenot dna asbs teson"* (or something), scrambling her words into unintelligible dance music, but then they throw in the Z 3 MCs bit (*"make the bass come out so clear-clear"*) for clarity. The drums sound live and very un-Miami, rolling and crashing high while the bottom makes your speakers hack up hairballs. After at least four breakdowns, it ends with a stern Kraftwerk tapdance

DYNAMIX II
PURPLE BEATS
DYNAMIX II DLV2003 12" 1990

This is where a party of explorers hack away the last coil of jungle to reveal a mysterious ancient temple of speaker cabinets that deafens the party, leaving Professor Challenger lewdly rubbing his dactyls at the chance to teach the loinclothed Rockwell Welch some sign language. Dynamix II (David Noller and Scott Weiser) is best known for "Just Give The DJ A Break", a classic 1986 DJ cut that gave The Whispers some boom. Back in the Stone Age when New Orleans's Mannie Fresh was still making beats for Gregory D, Dynamix II released this Bounce prelude, by far the creepiest, most minimal instrumental on the squad and namesake of a Dutch record Website Don't wear flip-flops anywhere near those drum edits because Omar Santana jack-hammered the sidewalk into squid squish The Dynamix duo plays syncopated putt-putt and a barren wind indicates there are no survivors. The 808 spits Squarepusher drum rolls and a spare, ruin-toppling bass warns the party to get off the island before the big feast.

MAGGOZULU TOO
"ZINGEN, ZANGEN, GEZUNGEN" FROM MIAMI BASS WARS VOLUME II
PANDISC PD8813 LP 1991

What Miami Bass really needed was some accordion. The great James 'Maggotron' McCauley (who did the drum programming on MC ADE's "Bass Mechanic") had already used Chinese opera and llama toes on other tracks, so why not the sound of Italy's sinking city? Especially on "Red Velvet Couch" (from Maggotron's 1990 album, *Bass Planet Paranoid*), a song inspired by plastic covers on unsittable furniture. "Red Velvet Couch" used the "Throbbic Boomulator", a sludged down voice McCauley picked up from Funkadelic's "March To The Witches' Castle", which was made back when Kraftwerk were solving their own quadratic equations This went over big in Germany, so McCauley bought a bundle of language instruction records and made "Zingen, Zangen, Gezungen" ("Sing, Sang, Sung"), the highlight of *Miami Bass Wars Volume II*. It starts with a Bavarian drinking chant, concludes with frogs jumping across stones A bamboo orchestra provides screaming stabs and it all bumps together nicely to a sinister, but reassuring, electro pulse, more Cybotron's "R 9" than "Planet Rock". "Zingen, Zangen, Gezungen" appears on *Miami Bass Wars Volume II*. Inspired by WWII propaganda art, the cover depicts thousands of soldiers marching to their doom into a pig's head bigger than Zardoz. The sleevenotes pretty much diss everybody in this Primer who McCauley considered was no longer holding up their (low) end of the deal.

DJ MAGIC MIKE
"BASS IN THE PLANET MIX" FROM DON'T STOP... PLANET ROCK EP
TOMMY BOY EW4509 CD/12" 1992

"FEEL THE BASS 3" FROM AIN'T NO DOUBT ABOUT IT
CHEETAH 9405 LP 1991

While 2 Live Crew were earning their Parental Advisory stickers, Orlando's DJ Magic Mike's speedy scratch Bass went gold on his own Cheetah label, setting standard for regional Southern HipHop Mike was the only highlight on Tommy Boy's *Don't Stop... Planet Rock* remix EP, but it would've been nice if the intended Dynamix track made the cut Mike's sublime adjustment – just an extra sproing in the break made "Planet Rock" a Florida citizen rather than the New York tourist everyone wanted to emulate. Although his rappers often sounded like Chuck D doing radio ads, his albums always included several instrumentals, sampling the funk like his New York peers but opening it up with Orlando bass. Meanwhile, dope springs eternal in the subdecay of "Feel The Bass 3", which, with its fritzed frequencies, has become the weapon of choice in car audio competitions. Easily one of instrumental HipHop's top ten.

MASTER ACE INC
BORN TO ROLL
DELICIOUS VINYL 10140 12" 1993

Although Stetsasonic and Tuff Crew tried their best with "Miami Bass" and "My Part Of Town" respectively, the Northeast wanted nothing to do with the Bass Confederacy. Seemingly anticipating the Dirty South rising again in the mid-90s, though, Brooklyn's Master Ace began to surround himself with some Dade County Bass pressure. Ace's "Jeep Ass Niguh" had already been stripped down to a "Bizapella Version", "Born To Roll" is the car show in the next lot, muffling traffic cops and enhancing city air quality. Ace taunts, *"You know that America don't wanna hear the sound of the bass drum music go back to Africa"*. Hotwiring a frazzled 808 from Original Concept's "Knowledge Me", it makes a salient point about New York driving: if you're gonna be in bumper-to-bumper, your system may as well bump. The shimmering horns and ARP synth seem to make it glide, but that's just the heat. With eviction-earning decibels, "Born To Roll" drives people into the streets for open hydrant season. Of course it was a big hit in Miami, dissing low rider Cadillacs and replacing Kid Frost as the car show spokesman. Only, I wouldn't want to piss off Kid Frost. *Thanks to Papa Juan Wheelie and Dante Cartefagna To hear some of the recordings mentioned here in RealAudio, point your Web browser to www.wfmu.org/playlists/shows/4205. For even more Bass, head for: www.bassmusic.de and groups.yahoo.com/group/Miami Bass_History/*

PHOTOS: CORBIS (TOP ROW); REDFERNS

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT, SIR MIX-A-LOT, SHOCK G OF DIGITAL UNDERGROUND, 2 LIVE CREW

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Playlists from the outer limits

Toys in the attic: Charlemagne Palestine's housemates (see Invisible Jukebox, page 20)

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Uriah Heep
"Sunrise" from The Magician's Birthday (Bronze)
Tiny Tim
"The Other Side" from God Bless Tiny Tim (Reprise)
Two Gospel Keys
"Every Man's Gotta Lay Down And Die" from Country Gospel 1946-53 (Document)
Karen Dalton
"Katie Cruel" from In My Own Time (Paramount)
Paris Sisters
"Stand Naked Clown" (Cresendo single)
Iron Butterfly
"Possession" from Heavy (Atco)
Love
"Alone Again Or" from Forever Changes (Elektra)
Schola Hungarica
"Canto Ad Laudem Cantoris" from Chant Gregorien D'Aquitaine (Harmonia Mundi)
Joseph Spence And The Pindar Family
"I Bid You Goodnight" from The Real Bahamas (Nonesuch)
Klaus Nomi
"Total Eclipse" from Klaus Nomi (RCA)
Shirley Collins
"Barbara Allen" from Power Of The True Love Knot (Polydor)
Bill Fay
"The Time Of The Last Persecution" from The Time Of The Last Persecution (Deram)
Jobriath
"Inside" from Jobriath (Elektra)
Reverend Edward W Clayborn
"This Time Another Year You May Be Gone" from The Guitar Evangelist (Document)
Arthur Doyle
"Hey Minnie Hey Wilbur Hey Mingus" from Plays And Songs From The Songbook (Audible Hiss)

Compiled by David Tibet, Current 93

Fractal 15

Murahachibu
Live 72 (Goodlov)
Zuno Keisatsu
1st (ZKC)
Morita Doji
Good Bye (Warner)
Kinshi Tsuruta
Satsuma Biwa (Ocora)
Acid Mothers Temple
Univers Zen Ou De Zero A Zero (Fractal)
International Harvester
Sov Gott Rose Marie (Silence)
Peter Ivers
Terminal Love (WEA)
The Electric Prunes
Stockholm 67 (Heartbeat)
Peter Perrett
Wake Up Sticky (Demon)
Ton Steine Scherben
Keine Macht Fur Niemand (David Volksmund)
Seesselberg
Synthetik 1 (Plate Lunch)
Chairmen Of The Board
Skin Im In (Sequel)
Arthur Doyle
Plays The African Love Call (Ecstatic Yod)
Sunny Murray
Hommage To Africa (Actuel)
San Ui Lim
Vol 2 (Jigu)

Compiled by Cisco, Jérôme & Jun, Fractal Records, Paris, France www.fractal-records.com

Skug 15

Derek Bailey
Ballads (Tzadik)
Wang Inc
Risotto In 4/4 (BipHop)
Dogon
Before And After Dogon (Stereosupremo)
Badawi
Soldier Of Midian (ROIR)
Slim Gaillard
Cement Mixer (Bootleg)
Alexei Borisov
Before The Evrorement (N&B Research Digest/Avanto)
Dolly Parton
Halos And Horns (Zomba)
Kürten/Pawlowski/Wirkus
Kurten Pawlowski/Wirkus (Gusstaff)
Various
Blute (Karate Joe)
Frank London's Klezmer Brass Allstars feat Boban Markovic Orkestar & Hasabalia Brass Band
Brotherhood Of Brass (Piranha)
Steffen Basho-Junghans
Waters In Azure (Strange Attractors Audio House)
Gianni Stiletto
Kognitive Devide (Molar)
Randomnumber
I Understand (Rocket Racer)
People Like Us
Recyclopaedia Britannica (Mess Media)
Oxbow
An Evil Heat (Neurot)

Compiled by *Skug Journal Fur Musik*, Vienna, Austria www.skug.at

The Office Ambience

Various
20 Years Of Dischord (Dischord)
The Soft Pink Truth
Do You Party? (Soundslike)
DJ Cheb I Sabbah
Krishna Lila (Six Degrees)
Noriko Tujiko
Hard N Sasete (Mego)
Themselves
The No Music (Anticon)
Squarepusher
Do You Know Squarepusher (Warp)
Close Erase
Dance This (BP)
Tara Jane O'Neil & Daniel Littleton
Music For A Meteor Shower (Tiger Style)
The Replacements
Sorry Ma, Forgot To Take Out the Trash (Twin Tones/Restless)
Noxagt
no label promo
ESG
My Street (Soul Jazz)
Mr Lif
I Phantom (Def Jux)
Johnny Cash
With His Hot And Blue Guitar (Get Back)
Palestine/Coulter/Mathoul
Maximum (Young God)
Various
Never Mind The Bootlegs (Boomselection)

Compiled by *The Wire* Sound System

We welcome charts from record shops, radio shows, clubs, DJs, labels, readers, etc. Email charts@thewire.co.uk

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What Is Music 2002
Sydney, Australia

Soundcheck

This month's selected CDs, vinyl and singles

CLOSE ERASE
DANCE THIS
BP BP01010 CD

Over the last 20 years, Norwegian jazz has established an enviable world reputation, principally – but not solely – through ECM recording artists like Jan Garbarek and Terje Rypdal. Recently, however, the torch has been taken up by a second generation spearheaded by the likes of Jaga Jazzist, Spunk, Supersilent, Nils Petter Molvær, Scorch Trio and Tore Egarøy. Operating across a much broader front, this new wave embraces everything from extreme jazzpunk noise through recharged solar fusion to log cabin electronica. A good many of these artists have been championed by Rune Grammofon, the record company run by Monolight musician Rune Kristofferson (formerly of Norwegian new wave group Fra Lippo Lippi), who shares their capacity for experiment and adventure.

One immediately identifiable trait defining this resurgence, perhaps paradoxically, is its participants' refreshing willingness to openly celebrate their musical influences. They appear to be driven by a genuine desire to revisit dormant genres and renew lines of inquiry that might well have been cut off too early, just before the real discoveries were made. Consisting of Christian Wallumrød on keyboards, Ingebrigt Håker Flaten on bass and Per Oddvar Johansen on drums, Close Erase fulfil just such a protocol with discernment and conviction. The Oslo based Wallumrød's growing reputation centres around his acoustic piano work, which is ably demonstrated on his ECM debut, *No Birch* (incidentally, featuring Supersilent's Arve Henriksen on trumpet), as well as on Close Erase's two previous releases, *Close Erase* (1995) and *Close Erase No2* (1998, both on BP). By contrast, the trio go totally electric, in all senses, on their new CD, *Dance This*.

On the basis of its opening title track, some might interpret *Dance This* as an ironic challenge: like, dance to this if you can. It's a fast and furious fusion workout, with Johansen setting the breakneck pace. His intricate drum patterns pulsate with the infectious relentlessness of synthesized programming, but with all the humanity restored, making it easy to embrace his undisputed technical facility. Influences soon become apparent. Wallumrød's electric piano recalls Chick Corea's work with Miles Davis's third great quintet, or Jan Hammer's contributions to the first Mahavishnu Orchestra. Its clangourous, ringing quality sends up murky overtones that are at once piercing and unforgettable. Wallumrød's derivations are well signposted – an easily recognised quote from *A Love Supreme*, in one instance – but the work is by no means derivative. He's not about styling pastiches out of a bankrupt need to acknowledge touchstone sounds from fusion's history. Rather, he treats these source materials as unfinished business, for which he seeks alternative solutions in a different time and place. Håker Flaten is a virtuoso bassist, as evidenced by his contribution to The Scorch Trio (shared with guitarist Raoul Björkenheim and drummer Pål Nilssen-Love), as well as in his own group (Atomic, whose *Feet Music* can be found on Bugge Wesseltoft's Jazzland label). Heard here on electric bass, he provides a strong, yet uncomplicated, underlying pulse that coheres perfectly with Johansen's insistent momentum.

The rhythm and flow, once established, mutate into other areas of interest, making allusions to the abstract resonance of Herbie Hancock's *Sextant* period. By now, Wallumrød is experimenting with an extensive palette of different keyboards and synthesized sounds. Gritty growls and irritating scratches vie for position with tinny, bubbling effervescences. His sound is open and free flowing, and the overall balance of the trio is designed to exhilarate. They have a capacity for absorbing influences and styles, and then reinterpreting them as high energy fusion.

So far so good, but it gets even better. The CD's centrepiece is a four part suite entitled "Zoo Solitude", where the trio expand well beyond the hitherto dominant, funk-infected fusion model. The frenetic quality of the suite's opener gives way to a more evenly measured abstraction, which bears the hallmarks of Paul Bley's *Scorpio* period forays into synthesizer composition. Their music similarly juxtaposes a sense of exotic surrealism with an alienating ambience, while its impressive tonal fluctuations are invested with ideas of captivity and segregation. The work's tension is derived from its weird way of caging sounds, denying them naturally unfettered expression. Wallumrød takes centre stage throughout, as the rhythm section set up unobtrusive, going on submerged, repetitive underpinnings that bolster the music's shackled moods. Bennie Maupin & Patrick Gleeson's 1998 collaboration *Driving While Black* occupied a similar tonal zone, but this subtle work has a melancholy edge all its own.

The closing fusion track, "Rigid Digit", might bring us full circle, but the CD's sequencing, with a drastic change of mood at its centre, subverts its initial 'all stops out' momentum towards a more introspective, slightly darker, conclusion.

John Cratchley is shocked by the raw electricity of Norwegian fusion trio Close Erase, led by pianist Christian Wallumrød (right)

BARRY ADAMSON
THE KING OF NOTHING HILL
MUTE STUMM176 CD

BY BLEDDYN BUTCHER

Barry Adamson began his solo career by composing hypothetical soundtracks – scoring blank scripts, unseen footage and skewed monologues. His records have a hardboiled noir sensibility spiked with sardonic humour, establishing a dry narrative ambience. His sixth solo album continues the trend begun with *As Above, So Below* (1998), swapping the adventurous and, at times, alarming atmospheres he created for *Soul Murder* (1994) and *Oedipus Schmoedipus* (1996) for a more accessible sound – the lingua franca of fun. Most of the tracks on *The King Of Nothing Hill* – a truly pointless pun – might have been recorded against a wah-wah click.

The opener, "Cinematic Soul", addresses this shift in emphasis. Adamson depicts himself as a crazed consumer, fantasising about owning a multiplex – no longer the dark architect of screen dreams but a kid in an eye candy store. This is a deliberate revision, a creative realignment, a knowing embrace of popular forms. To some extent, it's commendable: *"After all, what is a song,"* Adamson asks his ebullient son, *"if you can't sing along?"* Trashy aesthetics never had such a fetching pretext.

The texture of much of the music reflects the mood at the multiplex: loud, brash, frenetic and crass, albeit only occasionally. There's no space for small effects, no pause that refreshes, no room for mutinous doubt. With cymbal shimmer, engine shudder and concourse interference plugging every hole, the production simply will not chill out. The party bangs busily on.

Some of *Nothing Hill*'s characters Adamson presents – the soul man, the hustler, the romantic fool – are as over-familiar as the album's sonic stratagems. Roles he once subverted are now hooked straight off the peg, and some awful lyrical lapses scupper otherwise promising pieces. The inverted paean "That Foot Was Me" has a fine sense of mischief and much to recommend it, like its jaunty New Orleans horns, until it's blighted by the news that his abandoned amorata warms *"the very cockles of his soul"*! Way to go, Bazza! Why retire a cliche when you can make it ghastlier yet?

Elsewhere, though, Adamson's satirical impulse serves him well. The brooding dystopian reverie "Vanished Smile" benefits from its self-mocking domestic perspective and oblique social commentary. Authorial distance somehow reinforces the gnomic refrain *"Everyone is everyone"*, investing it with an air of foreboding untainted by personal bitterness. Too bad there's not more in this style.

APE SHIT
SONIA SUTCLIFFE WAS HERE/IN HEIR OF ELVIS
MACDOUGALL 1/8 CD

SNUFF/PARENTS TELL YOUR CHILDREN YOUR DREAMS
MACDOUGALL 3/8 CD

BY BEN WATSON

These two albums are from a series recorded in 2001 at The Bunker just before underground rock star and mental health irritant James MacDougall was barred for life from Core Arts, a psychiatric 'enabling' institution. The key move for a charismatic lunatic like MacDougall is to obtain the services of excellent musicians, and that is precisely what he's done. Rock in the UK hasn't kicked like this since Edgar Broughton, PiL and The Pop Group. Suggesting Johnny Moped if he'd been less dim, or Royal Trux before they went dull, Ape Shit blow away the miasma of emulation that belies so many new groups' claims to be raw and direct. If post-rockers James Taylor leavened with 'experimental' textures, Ape Shit are the necessary corrective: vortices of forcefields perpetrated with rock instruments. Lewis Watson's bass and Errol Hunter's drums are joltingly present. When violinist White Gerry and guitarist Attila The Hun join in on *In Heir Of Elvis*, they achieve a hair-raising madpride climax, peppered with the players' awareness of heavy dub and drum 'n' bass.

Not that you're allowed to enjoy these felicities without suffering stretches of crudely edited in-studio altercation, rehearsal disasters, rows and aggro. But these audio snapshots present MacDougall's on the edge existence as 'in yer face' rebel, comedy prophet and poser of awkward questions. As producer, MacDougall alternates digital quality recordings of street, shop, Tube and toilet with Ape Shit's dictaphone quality punk. Rock's immediacy has been ill served by fancy production, which usually entails bourgeoisification of the most banal kind. Here guitar, bass and drums are dishevelled, distorted and unbalanced, but their brutal impact is nevertheless juicy and appealing.

Ape Shit make rock do its job – which is to flob all over the plastic people who manage the pop spectacle. To achieve this, the degree of antisocial spleen must match the formal rupture: this is why art rockers so often inadequate. Ape Shit's clattering, intoxicating junkyard of bad sounds make all those Knitting Factory feedback jams sound like the luxury shag pile carpets they really are. This isn't rock as 'avant pop', but as live jam *versus* the pop narcotic. The players' assertions jostle, cajole, spur each other on. The Sex Pistols murdering "Johnny B Goode" and "Road Runner" on *The Great Rock'n'Roll Swindle* has turned into a modus vivendi. Let's all go *Ape Shit*!

ALBERT AYLER
LÖRRACH, PARIS 1966
HATOLOGY 573 CD

PROPHECY
ESP 3030 CD

BY ANDY HAMILTON

The first time I listened to Albert Ayler's *Spiritual Unity*, I threw up. As it happens, it was a case of food poisoning, but Ayler's music still provokes strong reactions. *Prophecy*, also on ESP was recorded live by the classic Ayler trio, with drummer Sunny Murray and bassist Gary Peacock, at New York's Cellar Cafe a month earlier in 1964. The programme is identical to *Unity*, except for the addition of "Prophecy", a warning prediction of pain and misery. For all their avoidance of any obvious structural parameters, the trio achieve coherence, though the great bassist Peacock is even lower in *Prophecy*'s live mix than on *Unity*.

The line-up on *Lorrach, Paris 1966* is equally characteristic, a quintet featuring Ayler's brother Donald on trumpet, violinist Michael Samson, William Folwell on bass and Beaver Harris on drums. Donald's trumpet playing here fits well into Ayler's New Orleans heterophony. More structured and accessible, the live set is enthusiastically received. There are multiple folk references, with a strangely Scottish feel to "Bells", and a pervasive "Marseillaise". Archie Shepp once declared himself a sentimentalist; the same goes for Ayler. Close to bathos, the tenorist sighs and sobs his way through the "American paraphrase marches" which he had increasingly turned to.

Ayler was even more uncompromising than Ornette Coleman and Cecil Taylor in his total rejection of the European influence in jazz. His simple march material and archetypal bugle calls aimed to recover the preharmonic innocence of African-American music. But I wonder about the saxophonist's articulate comments, quoted in Peter Niklas Wilson's sleevenotes, from a *Down Beat* interview: "It's really free, spiritual music, not just free music. Many of the others [in the 'New Thing'] are not playing together, and so they produce noise. It's screaming, it's neo-avant garde music. But we are trying to rejuvenate the old New Orleans feeling that music can be played collectively and with free form." The link with New Orleans has become a critical commonplace, but this wouldn't be the first case of words being put into a musician's mouth. Perhaps Niklas Wilson has more to say on this in his Ayler book, *Spirits Rejoice* (still awaiting translation from German).

During the same European tour, the BBC notoriously scrubbed its recording of Ayler's London concert – probably the only time his playing was filmed. Well, videotape was expensive and jazz was then classified as ephemeral light entertainment. Light entertainment certainly it wasn't. They might not be his best work: these two neglected recordings are still compelling products of Ayler's maturity.

CAPTAIN BEEFHEART AND HIS MAGIC BANDS
MAGNETIC HAND
VIPER CD011 CD

BY BLEDDYN BUTCHER

One day, every moment of existence will be available for endless re-examination on *Deja-VD*. The past will enjoy a renewed period of exponential growth. The present will simply disappear, consumed by living memory, boiled in esprit d'escaliers. In the future, when nothing will happen once and for all, quality control will become impossible.

In the meantime, we can amuse ourselves with barrel scraping exhumations of every event ever exposed to magnetic tape. This latest addition to the ever expanding Beefheart archive collects 'field recordings', made between 1972 and 1980, from seven English performances by different formulations of The Magic Band.

The sound quality is variable in the extreme, often veering between muffled and boomy several times within the space of a song. Consequently, there's no reason to prefer these performances to their studio counterparts. Unless, that is, you treasure such moments as the Captain answering a barking dog at the Bickershaw Festival in May 1972 as if it were a heckler: "You got in free?"

The interplay between the musicians is not so sharply caught. The awkward logic of Magic Band arrangements, their interlocking angularity and sonorous strangeness, is reduced to a niffy thud. There is no semblance of funk. Beefheart growls and hollers without discernible purpose, and blows hard at his harp. He sings songs nobody knows. The stop/start structure of "Beatle Bones N' Smokin' Stones" confuses the audience but there's no edifying tension. Nor is there audible embarrassment. In the heat of the moment, this incoherence might have been splendid. As an artefact, it's woebegone. Pass.

THE BLUE NOTES
TOWNSHIP BOP
PROPER PRP013 CD

BY JULIAN COWLEY

The Blue Notes left South Africa to play the Antibes Festival in the summer of 1964 and never returned home. The following year, members of the group enriched the London jazz scene with a sense of music from beyond America and Europe. They also proved sympathetic collaborators for more intrepid British players such as pianist Keith Tippett and drummer John Stevens.

Township Bop presents their earliest recordings, made at the start of 1964 in Cape Town for the South African Broadcasting Company. Long thought permanently lost, their quality is surprisingly bright. The only other extant recording made before their departure, issued in 1995 as *The Blue Notes Legacy* (Ogun CD), featured pianist Chris McGregor, Dudu Pukwana on alto, bassist Johnny Dyani, trumpeter Mongezi Feza and Nick Moyake on tenor. The same quintet features on four of this CD's 14 tracks. Elsewhere, Sammy Mantz plays bass, and Early Mabuza replaces the estimable Moholo on some tracks. The Blue Notes were racially mixed and their jazz necessarily spoke political defiance and affirmative resistance under apartheid. Duke Ellington was far more than a narrowly musical model for them. The Blue Notes interpret his "Angelica" and "Take The Coltrane" on *Township Bop*, and his imperative of swing is faithfully observed through the rest of the set. McGregor's "Now" discloses interest in Monk, and Pukwana's "Kay" leans into bebop. African folk accents mark the altoist's "The Blessing Light". These pieces subsequently became mainstays in their respective repertoires.

Placed alongside their later work, these appealing tapes make it clear how The Blue Notes' young players (Feza and Dyani were barely out of their teens) added vitality to the London scene, where the grip of American precursors had been loosened, while seizing its offers of creative freedom to develop voices unmistakably their own.

BRUTUM FULMEN
FLESH OF THE MOON
CRIPPLED INTELLECT CIP07 CD

BY DAN WARBURTON

Though this is their debut album, Jeff Wrench's Connecticut based musique concrète outfit Brutum Fulmen took a long run up via a handful of limited edition cassette and CD-R releases, a modest contribution to Intransitive Records' compilation *Various*, and the split LP *Tender Wreckage* (with Lasse Marhaug, on Gameboy). Following the lead of their Latin name (meaning "senseless thunderbolt") The nine sumptuous tracks of *Flesh Of The Moon* have more in common with the sensuality of Parmegiani than American electronica's and conceptualism.

More than half the tracks are sourced from the

Boston rapper Mr Lif is a political firebrand whose debut album calls for a revolution of everyday life, says Chris Sharp

Phantom of liberty: Mr Lif

MR LIF
I PHANTOM
DEFINITIVE JUX DJX37 CD/2XLP

It's been a long road. Biographical colour emerges readily from the lucid flows that populate Mr Lif's debut album – and the message is clear: this Boston, Massachusetts based MC has paid his dues. He's been writing rhymes since 1993 and forcing his way onto wax – through whatever underground channels opened up to him – since 97. Releases on Brick Records and Grand Royal amongst others laid the foundations for his current association with Def Jux, paving the way towards this, the most substantial and accomplished release of his career.

I Phantom was heralded by the *Emergency Rations* EP, which caused something of a stir Stateside when it was released earlier this year. The standout cut, "Home Of The Brave", was explicit and specific in its criticism of post-9/11 America: *"Here's what the history books won't show/You're a dead man for fucking with American dough"*. But Lif is no straightforward political firebrand; or at least he's a political firebrand who fully recognises that the fiercest critiques – and the most staunch resistance – stems from a finely observed understanding of everyday life. The refusenik stance articulated on *I Phantom* is shrewder and less bombastic, by and large; hence "Live From The Plantation", an acerbic dissection of McJob hell, whose lyrical trajectory moves neatly from from the personal to the universal: *"My boss walks by, he looks just like an asshole/Smiling 'cause he jerks niggas for minimal cashflow/He's cool in my face but I swear I heard him laugh though/Tickled by the fact that I'm the modern day Sambo/And just when I think that I'm about to go Rambo/I call up my man and he says he understands, yo/We all are being murdered by a similar process/Whether you work at the candy store or slave at the office/The purpose of our lives is just to service the economy/They misinform our minds to paint a picture of harmony/But if you're listening you know that shit's out of tune/The function of our lives is just to work and consume."*

All of which trips out with an easy clarity. Lif names Wu-Tang's GZA and Gang Starr's Guru as his favourite MCs, but he rarely ventures into the former's densely allusive stylistic territory, and his delivery is far closer to the fluid precision of the latter. In fact, and in contrast to the tense, claustrophobic, glitchy futurism that pervades the work of Def Jux labelmates like El-P, Cannibal Ox and Aesop Rock, *I Phantom* nods regularly in the direction of HipHop's 'golden age' – A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul, BDP and Public Enemy are all namechecked, and the upbeat tempos keep things moving along in a crisp, uncomplicated fashion that will inspire nostalgic reveries in many a lapsed B-boy.

But *I Phantom* is far more than just a straightforwardly reverential exercise – thanks largely to El-P's presence on production. Perhaps inspired by the smooth, light flow of Lif's accessible rhyming, El-P has reined in most of his darker instincts, putting together instead slyly complex and texturally colourful beats that positively glimmer with invention. His approach is set by the opening "Glimpse Of The Struggle", where evanescent smears of sound and slippery scratches slide neatly between skippy beats, and tersely cinematic aural cues (sirens, close-miked breathing) switch the mix to widescreen for tantalising, vanishing moments. On the following, and equally jaunty, "Return Of The B-boy", coyly squelching basslines, tingling semi-submerged arpeggios and ravey pitched-up vocals combine in a joyous rush of Old School positivity, only to vanish abruptly half-way through and replaced by a sparse, skittering jazz loop. El-P's tracks make up about half of the record, and by and large, they're the most consistently intriguing; but the dumb disco stabs that Fakts One brings to bear on "New Man Theme" and the new wave bassline that pumps through the Insight-produced "Status" ensure plentiful reserves of freshness and diversity.

I Phantom is not a perfect record. The climactic second to last track, "Earth Crusher", is an uneasy halfway house between apocalyptic vision and fantasy power-trip that's weighed down by Insight's lumbering rhythms. It's only partially redeemed by the sober closer "Post Mortem". But then, as the lyrical thrust makes clear throughout, this is not a perfect world. And for all those sinners who can get with an infectious melange of block-party beats, questing sounds and smoothly-delivered, deftly conscious lyrics, *I Phantom* could prove to be one of the most consistently rewarding HipHop records to land in 2002.

sound of an old manual typewriter, which also happens to be the album's cover star. But this is no mere exercise in nostalgia. The spaced out "Mourn" transforms computer data into audio files, and "Haunted Space" fast forwards DAT recordings of live performances amid the clatter and scrape of scrap metal and plastic forks.

Wrench meticulously documents his sources and working methods throughout. But knowing a track like "Spore" was sourced from a damaged vinyl copy of Tore H Boe's *Serum*, which turned up in the post without an envelope, doesn't necessarily help your enjoyment of it. Fortunately Wrench is not about to let a cute, arty concept constrict musical considerations.

Most source sounds are transformed beyond all recognition. The way the old typewriter is made to sound like treacle flowing through underground caves in "Moisture" beggars belief. Elsewhere Wrench lets the tape roll with astounding results, as on the track documenting the dousing of a camp fire with a jug of water. His understanding of reverb adds richness and depth to the sound of squeaking door hinges and grumbling radiator pipes on "Pickle Mutation", which wouldn't be out of place on a David Lynch soundtrack. The closing "Lake Of Dreams" shapes field recordings of traffic and *birdsong alongside a forlorn music box playing* "Love Me Tender" into a surreal and touching nocturne worthy of Steven Stapleton.

JOHN CAGE
ROARATORIO
MODE 28/29 2XCD

BY DAN WARBURTON

"*Finnegans Wake* is one of the books which I've always loved and never read," John Cage announced with a smile at the Nova Convention in 1979, going on to explain how his "Writing For The Second Time Through Finnegans Wake" is made up of mesostics constructed on the name James Joyce. Invited by Klaus Schoning to provide music for his mesostics, Cage went through Joyce's book and painstakingly listed all the sounds mentioned in it, and defined a set of instructions based on chance operations for *recording ambient sound in some of the books* 2462 locations, as listed by Louis Mink in his *A Finnegans Wake Gazeteer*.

From the outset, Cage imagined a circus featuring the Irish traditional music that underpins Joyce's work, and travelled to Norwich to hear "the King of Irish singers" Joe Heaney perform in a local pub. Heaney agreed to participate and recommended Cage also use traditional Irish music for fiddle, flute, uilean pipes and bodhran drum. The resulting horsp ev, *Roaratorio*, is the culmination of Cage's 1970s text compositions based on existing writings (notably Thoreau's *Journal*). Its glorious 62 track tape montage of everything from Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge* to police car sirens and bleating sheep recalls both his 1942 radio play with Kenneth Patchen, *The City Wears A Slouch Hat* and the inspired mayhem of *Variations III And IV*.

Mode's beautifully realised edition has two booklets, which include an introduction taken from Cage's 1979 speech in Donaueschingen, an annoyingly edited 29 page transcription of "Laughtears" (from a conversation with Klaus Schoning), and, in all its typographical glory, the complete 41 page text of *Writing*. Each traditional Irish tune is listed, as are the 1210 sounds of Cage's "listing", ranging from farts to thunderclaps, complete with instructions about how these ambient sounds should be "collected" at the sites cited. His score, meanwhile, describes how to go about "translating a book into a performance without actors, both literary and musical or one or the other". In fact, the score's instructions hold true for any book, since the work's real title reads *(title of composition), (article) (adjective) Circus On (title of book)*. In theory, then, listeners could have a go at producing their own *Roaratorio* from Cage's hour long recording of *Writing*. Indispensable.

JONATHAN COLECLOUGH
PERIOD/PERIODICITY
ANOMALOUS NOM4 CD

JONATHAN COLECLOUGH & COLIN POTTER
LOW GROUND
ICR ICR33 CD

BY J M HAYNES

Jonathan Coleclough likes to explain his music with a phrase subconsciously echoing Samuel Delany: "The motion of light in water". The British drone explorer's compositions are constructed around the tiny imperfections and unique variations drawn from a long continuous sound. Few artists could pull off the seemingly difficult task of sustaining interest in extended duration pieces based on an absolute minimum of activity, but Coleclough has had the good fortune to work with several of them, notably the hermetic Andrew Chalk, who also works with Christoph Heemann in Mirror, and Colin Potter, who has frequently engineered Nurse With Wound sessions. Chalk is an ephemeral presence on these two recordings, where Potter participates as collaborator and engineer.

Period/Periodicity is the extended CD version of the Coleclough's *Period* LP, also released by Anomalous. Its sounds are entirely sourced from the piano, whose clustered notes he massages into variable, evanescent washes. Smeared through digital effects, these pointillist marks recall earlier, piano driven Ambient works such as Eno's *Thursday Afternoon*. Except that Coleclough's sensibility and pacing are even slower, and his soundfields are correspondingly sparser. Used in conjunction with his assortment of blurring techniques, the piano activates a subtle yet distinct tension between harmonious purity and unnerving dissonance. Over the duration of this sprawling double CD, the keyboards' most obvious tones are gradually done away with. For his part, Potter contributes a track that continues the piano erosion of Coleclough's work, entangling the instrument's reverberations to such a degree, he effectively erases the original notes. Coleclough completes the album with an extended buzzing drone, drawn from the source materials for the epic Chalk/Coleclough *Sumac* sessions.

Picking up where *Period/Periodicity* ends, the drones vibrate with a greater intensity on the Coleclough and Potter collaboration *Low Ground*, in part due to their increased application of DSP trickery to single notes played by saxophonist Tim Hill. By the time they've finished, all they keep from his playing is the smattering of metallic colour permeating the works' layers of pixelations, tremolo time-stretches and synthetic reverberations.

WARN DEFEVER
WHEN FLOWERS COVERED THE EARTH
PERFORATE MY HEART NO NUMBER CD

BY MIA L CLARKE

Warn Defever has only recently emerged as an artist in his own right, releasing a pair of singer-songwriter albums after several years working as His Name is Alive and producing groups such as Ida and Godzuki. For this instrumental album, he gathered a small ensemble of classical players versatile enough to play his compositions, and also to participate in collective improvisation.

Defever is at his most fluent and articulate when concentrating on pieces of minimal simplicity. His slowly layered instrumental parts slither across each other to effect shifting tonal pools that subversively dissolve the time signatures meant to hold them in. On "Sunrise", he tactfully introduces melodiously percussive chimes to gently processed upright bass and a sparse, Satie like piano chord progression, in the process reconciling its easy, shimmering motion with the stark continuity of the album. Elsewhere he undermines the metrical certainties of its formal string sections, dominated by pizzicato violin, with time-smearing cymbal sweeps.

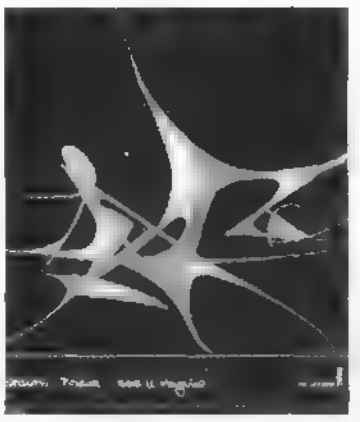
Heard as a single evolving suite, *When Flowers Covered The Earth* is a challenging, unstable molecule of a composition structured around the conflicting cadences and velocities of its constituent classical, free jazz and electronic elements. Rather than resolve them into a homogenous whole, Defever structures these irregularities into the album's overall design. Defever is most affecting, however, when he exploits the ominous sadness of resonating minor key passages on a track like "A Suicide Note", where a dragging string section is submerged in a restless flow of darkly sustained piano clusters.

JOHN DUNCAN/ZEITKRATZER
FRESH
X TRACT XT2005 ALL QUESTIONS AQ03 CD

BY WILL MONTGOMERY

Confrontational artist John Duncan and the German ensemble Zeitkratzer were recently joint artists in residence at Berlin's Podewil, and their encounter is preserved for posterity in this release. Duncan has long had an appetite for collaboration with strong musical personalities and he finds an imaginative sounding board in Reinhold Friedl's New Music group, who have specialised in feeding extreme sonic material through a fundamentally acoustic framework. Earlier this year they performed Lou Reed's *Metal Machine Music*, they've also tackled sonic maximalist Merzbow and electronic minimalist Bernhard Günter, as well as composers like Helmut Lachenmann and Luigi Nono.

Fresh brings together two Duncan pieces, "Nav Flex" and "Trinity". The first was originally a 2001 collaboration with Francisco Lopez, and the second comes from a 1996 Ash International compilation. Duncan's usual base materials are treated 'electronic' sounds taken from non-musical sources — shortwave signals, or the emissions of a linear particle accelerator, for example. Zeitkratzer is a ten piece featuring conventional strings, percussion and brass, plus one member credited with electronics. The music works its surprises by filtering acoustically produced drones and objectified sounds through



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an electronic aesthetic. The results have an oddly removed effect. Zeitkratzer and Duncan appear to share an interest in the sheer plasticity of acoustic sound, and the pursuit of this interest takes them into some remarkable spaces. "Nav-Flex" originally for shortwave signals, is dominated by wavering strings and breathy saxophone coalescing into an unstable drone. Making a point of its circularity, its principal looping sound is set against the shifting textural material collecting at its periphery. Its forward movement, such as it is, derives from the mobility of its marginal elements.

"Trinity" is even better, full of suppressed menace. It mixes episodes of surging, pitchbending drone with harsh noise that then modulates into distressed accordion tones. Three minutes from the end the tension is diffused, as the piece dissolves into insubstantial gusts of breath. Under Duncan's conducting, the ever resourceful Zeitkratzer have pulled off two more provocative feats of sonic transposition.

WERNER DURAND
THE ART OF BUZZING: EXCUSE THE DELAY, VOLUME ONE
X-TRACT XT2004 CD

BY WILL MONTGOMERY

Werner Durand has been building wind instruments out of PVC and perspex since the early 1980s. His background is in combining influences from non-Western musics with the kind of drone-based minimalism that grew out of the 1960s avant garde's engagement with traditional musical forms. *The Art Of Buzzing* is his first solo album, released on Berlin venue Podewil's x-tract label. His title is aptly chosen for a CD comprising multitracked drone pieces, performed mainly on PVC clarinets with 'buzzing resonators'. Durand has been exploring varieties of buzzing – a musical phenomenon he links to various African and Asian cultures – since the mid-1980s. Most of the album was assembled over a two-year period, though a track called "Third Monolith Close-Up" uses elements he co-composed and recorded between 1990-95 with Ralf Wehowsky. On this piece, the monolithic central drone and its harmonising subsidiaries are surrounded by a chorus of smaller events and sputtering resonation. The rest are developments of the same approach. Some add mournful trumpet-like tones. "Drone And Bees" is bolstered with a deep, low register loop; while "Slaughter Of Drones" loses its churning core and slides into swirling breathiness.

Durand's layered constructions evolve in a non-programmatic way, with different tonal relationships slowly forming between the various threads. Though the album explores rough, chafing textural qualities, it focuses on unpredictability and vacillation more than machine grind. The resulting restlessness prevents listeners sinking into a trance-like absorption in the drone. This music's queasy shifts demand active listening.

ELECTRONICAT
BIRDS WANT TO HAVE FUN
ANGELIKA KÖHLERMANN AK012 CD

BY ELISABETH VINCENTELLI

The relentless, white-cold flares on Electronicat's 1998 self-titled debut on the French Noise Museum label somehow managed to make heavily processed electronics sound both menacing and playful. Each track unfolded its one idea with deliberate precision, occasionally punctuated by moans and whispers as distorted as the guitars Electronicat's Fred Bigot allegedly used. Of course, singlemindedness has its appeal but, recognising the value of messing with listeners' expectations, Bigot littered the record with little ambushes. Like when chug-chugging Techno loops gave way to the push and pull of a Gary Glitter stomp on "Salooncore".

The same glam beat is the first thing you hear on "Boiantronic", which introduces *Birds Want To Have Fun*, an album full of songs as opposed to beats. Where the debut was minimal static murk, the guitars are now recognisable, and the beats are generated by primitive drum machines in place of pulsating drones. Its readily identifiable components render this music as transparent as those plastic bodies used by medical students. You *hear* the arteries and the blood, the connective tissue and the articulations. Bigot, who elsewhere isolates Techno down to its atomic components on artist Cécile Babiole's Web projects (www.musimatique.com/babiole/), here reshuffles these basic elements. He's influenced as much by the 1970s synth punk of Suicide, Cabaret Voltaire and the brilliant Métal Urbain offshoot Dr Mix And The Remixes as by the proto-pop sensibility of oddities like Polyphonic Size and Tax Girl. The album is driven by the unabashed pleasure it derives from the very process of putting something together.

The closing track, "Avion, Oiseaux Et Mobylette" (plane, birds and moped), may be the most inspiring. The track is what it says: sampled noises from its title's three components. It's gritty and free, unhinged and controlled at the same time. Brilliantly unveiling the way components make up a whole, it's a sonic answer to Edweard Muybridge's stop-motion photographs. Essentially, *Birds Want To Have Fun* dissects the idea of movement only to put it back together in as many ways as possible, and it's simply transporting.

FRITH/BOURNE/OSWALD
DEARNESS
SPOOL SPL116 CD

BY BILL SHOEMAKER

Toronto-based cellist and vocalist Anne Bourne does not have an iota of the iconic status of either guitarist Fred Frith or John Oswald – here on alto sax rather than plunderphonics – but she more than holds her own on this 1998 concert recording. Arguably, it is Bourne, an exponent of composer Pauline Oliveros's Deep Listening methods, who centres the trio at the outset of "A Walk Is An Adventure", which accounts for 38 of the album's 45-minute running time. While Frith taps and scrapes his strings and Oswald swerves between textures, Bourne sings, sighs and bows to incite an initial calm. Frith responds with spectral slide work and Oswald with otherworldly cries and whispers. For the remainder, it is Bourne, with gambits ranging from an agitated arco motif to plaintive vocalisations, who triggers transitions in this sprawling soundscape.

Still, Frith and Oswald merit equal credit for moving the music along with carefully accumulated and overlaid details. Both occasionally relegate themselves to the background, letting a timbre serve as a momentary template. When they step to the foreground, it is done cleanly, with a clear bead on the open space they seek to fill – if only partially. To her credit, Bourne doesn't flinch when Frith and/or Oswald unleash their furies but also dives into the breach. All three musicians come across as keen to blend with each other throughout the performance, even at its rawest, noisiest moments. Subsequently the main event is as well rounded as its structure is elusive. By comparison, "Three Hundred Ears And An Ocean" and "Lower Flower" are a bit like the encores of a Cecil Taylor solo set – engaging but fragmentary, quickly jotted postscripts to a long, vivid letter.

GOLD SPARKLE BAND
FUGUES & FLOWERS
SQUEALER 035 CD

BY DAVE MANDL

The Gold Sparkle Band's second release captures the Brooklyn-based free jazz quartet live at several stops on their 2000 Midwestern tour. With a huge, exuberant sound that belies their small size, they fuse elements of early Ornette Coleman, the mid-60s ESP crowd (especially Albert Ayler), the AACM in their heyday, and the contemporary downtown avant scene, which they enter via alto saxophonist and main composer Charles Waters and trumpeter Roger Ruzow's membership of William Parker's group. Intentionally or not, the unvarnished and somewhat boomy two-channel recording might just as easily have been made in 1964 as today. But the playing is of the highest calibre. Waters squeezes out seamless, arrhythmic lines that recall Ornette Coleman's legendary plastic instrument. Tireless drummer Andrew Barker attacks his kit with tastefully measured ferocity, especially on "Zodiac Attack", where he's intent on hitting everything in sight while keeping up a double-time pulse throughout a relentless solo clocking in at nearly four minutes.

Part composition and part 'comprovisation', GSB's arranged, often highly lyrical passages set up semi-improvised sections for the inevitable head-to-heads between Waters and Ruzow. Waters's four compositions are all adaptations of the fugue form, though fans of Baroque music might have trouble recognising them as such. Underneath the periodic blowouts, klezmer-like moments (with Waters switching to clarinet), blaring faux military statements (shades of Albert Ayler) and Ruzow's joyfully sputtering animal sounds. The quartet are at their best when they throw all caution to the wind, as on the rollicking collective composition "Zodiac Attack". But their beautifully restrained interpretation of the slow William Parker number "Holiday For Flowers" reveals a more expressive and delicate side.

MICHAEL GORDON
DECASIA
CANTALOUPE CA21008 CD

BY PHILIP CLARK

A large orchestral piece by an American post-minimalist is probably the last place you would expect to find an essay about decay. Whether it's the fragmenting structures and timbres of Helmut Lachenmann and Klaus Huber, or the psychological disintegration imposed on Galina Ustvolskaya and Sergey Kuryokhin by state interference with their right to create, decay has largely been a European preoccupation. By contrast, the very rationale of minimalism celebrates the process of accumulation. From

the earliest outings of Terry Riley and La Monte Young to the 'official' minimalism of Steve Reich and Philip Glass: these works embellish and decorate, ordering a multiplicity of sonic information from a single impulse.

By the time Florida born composer Michael Gordon was finding his compositional feet in the late 1970s and early 80s, minimalism had acquired a new complexity, expressed in Glass's opulent operas or labyrinthine orchestra adventures like Reich's *The Desert Music* and *Variations For Winds, Strings And Keyboards*. It took a decade for minimalism to move from wobbly tape loops and clapping hands to secure the establishment's respect, while at the same time finding a mass audience from beyond the classical ghetto.

A composer with minimalist sympathies writing about decay needs to unpick this complex history. Philip Glass's thoughts about environmental erosion in *Koyaanisqatsi* (1983) only make sense philosophically when allied to Godfrey Reggio's film, and Michael Gordon's contribution to *Decasia* is one panel of a multimedia spectacle masterminded by experimental film maker Bill Morrison. Described as an "irrelevant elegy to Walt Disney's *Fantasia*", its visual aspect consists of disintegrating celluloid overlaid by a collage of photographic images. In performance, the 55 member Basel Sinfonietta, conducted by Kasper De Roo, are spread over triangular scaffolding, with the audience sitting in the middle. The scaffolding is draped with large fabric rectangles that act as a morphing projection surface. Morrison's images begin with 1927 Sergei Eisenstein film documenting a Caesarean section, followed by a life cycle. Acting as counterpoint between birth and death, creation and decay, images flicker precariously before their age destroys them and they blister into absolute texture, or transmute into something else.

In terms of technique, Gordon's score is a brilliant compositional achievement, but as a portrait of decay it is fatally flawed. Its huge harmonic moments of arrival don't so much smack of disintegration as point in the opposite direction to organic growth. Yet even this is compromised by the material's tendency to stop and start, rather than build, fragment and fall apart. The huge momentum provoked by Gordon's optimistic recurring patterns sometimes sounds as if it's grafted in from another piece. The sonically thrilling Technicolor finale is also a problem. Gordon's cosy decision to combine all his strands into a moment of brazen resolution is decidedly inappropriate. Of course, none of this would matter if the piece was not about decay. However, parts leave an indelible mark. Gordon's oozing microtonal string melody encapsulates a sort of Philip K Dick like alienated angst, and the passages where the tension of the music surges to the top of the orchestra to produce the sonic equivalent of an overexposed photograph are stunning. Gordon has great ideas – they're just the wrong shape.

By contrast Richard Barrett addressed the theme of decay while defying minimalism's comforting trajectory in *Opening Of The Mouth* (ABC Classics). Decay is not only written into the fabric of his notes, but the audience has to sit surrounded by the smell of rotten fish. It's a genuine experience, whereas Gordon's theatrical response can't shake the legacy of minimalist scores that are designed to comfort and please.

HIRSCHE NICHT AUFS SOFA / MIESES GEGONGE
ABWASSERMUSIK
DOM DOM77 16 CD

HIRSCHE NICHT AUFS SOFA
MELCHIOR
DOM DOM77 17 CD

KÜTTEL IM FROST
DOM DOM77 18 CD

THE BOOK OF DINGESKIRCHEN
DOM DOM 77 20 CD

BY JIM HAYNES

Nurse With Wound has been the most common reference in the critical analysis of Hirsche Nicht Aufs Sofa. Nothing in these four reissues from the mid 80s is likely to change that. Christoph Heemann and Achim P Li Khan – the chief instigators of this German outfit with its revolving door of supporting players – paralleled Steven Stapleton as proprietors of parataxis: that is, the development of a logic through the juxtaposition or even just the proximity of disparate signifiers. Stapleton was always happy to reveal his many influences, be it Surrealism, free improvisation, musique concrète, Krautrock, or whatever. But the inspirational force behind HNAS appears to begin and end with Stapleton. Over these four albums (and elsewhere, Heemann's persona favourite *Im Schatten Der Mohre*), HNAS are moderately successful in their mimicry of Stapleton's methodology, often falling back upon the recurring tracks of haphazard guitar freakout and idiosyncratic electronics that characterised NWW's *Chance Meeting On A Dissecting Table*.

It would have been kinder to overlook the first HNAS album *Abwassermusik*, a collaboration with the little known Mieses Gegonge, which drowns textural events and thudding ur rock in a neverending cascade of delay. Handling the delay pedal a little more judiciously on the next album *Melchior*, HNAS turn out quite well. It's probably no coincidence that Stapleton and his wife Diana Rogerson guest on this relatively successful outing, which was originally released on NWW's United Dairies. Circulating baritone warblings, monochord rock riffs and the bricolage of splattered noise and voices dominate its towering centrepiece "Tonnenschwer Im Abendkleid". The deliberate confusion of Prog archetypes is the overriding concern of *Kuttle Im Frost*, where dutifully crafted earthen folksongs collide with brutist collages of radio noise and recontextualised self reflexive arguments about the ugliness of art. *The Book Of Dingenskirchen* collected HNAS's rarest material for its first pressing of 90 LPs. Encompassing new wave pop schlock, dim piano instrumentals, tricksy guitar solos, melancholy melodies, noise collages and more, this material hasn't aged well.

IRON AND WINE
THE CREEK DRANK THE CRADLE
SUB POP SP600 CD

BY BYRON COLEY

There has lately been a true and lovely burst of folk music from the American Underground. Think of Joshua Burkett, PG Six, Connie Acher, Dredd Foole, Matthew Valentine, Six Organs Of Admittance, Leslie Q, Jack Rose, and so on. Each uses fundamentals of semi-traditional folkiness to transport listeners somewhere special, in this post-core, post-free, post Cage world in which we wallow. You can add Iron And Wine to the list.

On this debut album, Iron And Wine is the solo affair of Floridian Sam Beam. Sightings of an Iron And Wine combo have been reported, but the performance here is naked and relaxed. Beam's approach is simple. The riffs he conjures up on home layered strings of acoustic and electric guitars, banjo, etc are as direct as the most unadorned compositions of Michael Hurley or Pearls Before Swine's Tom Rapp. This gives his playing an emotional immediacy that not all contemporary pickers can access.

The lyrical content on *The Creek Drank The Cradle* is personalised in the manner of those who have studied their Nick Drake LPs, but the air here is purely American. As the album's title makes clear, Beam is familiar with the iconic weight of certain words in an era that has rediscovered the anthological work of Harry Smith. Other distinctly American moves inside his music are equally offered up without pretense. The sweetness of his melodic construction and delivery carries whiffs of both David Crosby and early Paul Simon, two references that are anathema to any but the least self-conscious student of the American folk tradition.

For all that namechecking, what makes this album so captivating is its unique blend of elements. Its gentle waver draws me deeper into its depths each time I play it. The way that the lo-fi recording combines with the mesmeric quality of the circular riff-play and the romantic whisper of the vocals creates a rare holism.

It is, perhaps, curious that an album like this has found its home on a label, synonymous with a very specific brand of raunchy rock. But it is more exciting to think that the old guard of subterranean American is expanding its head to encompass all that is worthwhile – genres be damned. As they should be.

ERNÖ KIRÁLY
SPECTRUM
AUTOBUS/TRACE CD/CD ROM

BY JULIAN COWLEY

Isolated from the West European avant garde and its post-Webern orthodoxies, Hungarian composer Erno Kiraly (born 1919) has pursued a highly personal musical course along lines defined by awareness of folk traditions, interest in electronic music and graphic scores, and his talent for instrument building. His music received exposure on *Phoenix* (ReR CD) and the picture is filled out further by *Spectrum*. The opening 25 minutes are allocated to a children's opera, *The Little Glutton*, recorded in 1963 by Ensemble RTV Novi Sad. Its integration of folk themes and tunings isn't enough to overcome familiar drawbacks: avuncular narrator, recurrent motifs that soon irritate, children's chorus. The first three parts of the expressionistic improvisatory series *Reflections* were recorded in 1968, with the composer playing guitar and zither and Katelin Ladik vocalising. Király's scrabbling, rustling, scraping and sliding methods come into their own on a fourth *Reflections* from 1974 where Vera Kovacs Vitkay's vocals are set against his newly invented zitherphone, a 58 stringed instrument incorporating five Hungarian folk zithers within a single body. Its mimickry of electronic sonorities in places resembles a Fred Frith tabletop solo. *Reflection 7 T* from the same year, with Ladik responding to a visual text, demonstrates the effects his invention can

482 Music

Courage with Robert Creeley
The Way Out is Via the Door
482 1011

Sticks and Stones
Sticks and Stones
482 1012

Butcher, Masaoka | Robair
Guerrilla Mosaics
482 1013

The Treehouse Project
The Picture Show
482 1008

The Space Between
The Space Between with Barre Phillips
482 1007

produce with added reverb. The singers too achieve arresting effects although concert hall formality lingers at the heart of their fragmented cries and squeals

The CD ROM grants the zitherphone a full airing, 25 minutes of solo improvising by the 80 year old Király, bathed in red light the magus activating his occult apparatus. It's an intriguing spectacle and bears repeated viewing yet doubts remain concerning its enduring musical worth beyond the effects Similar doubts arise with regard to his 1998 solo on the more percussive tablophone that concludes the audio CD Arguably the most interesting music here is found in two interpretations of Király scores by Ensemble Acezantez, led by Croatian composer Dubravko Detoni where fascination with sound materials leads to forms that transcend novelty

K-SPACE
BEAR BONES
SLAM 247 CD

BY JULIAN COWLEY

"World Music. Shamanism. . Magnetic Fields", declares the cover presumably suggesting where *Bear Bones* might be filed This extraordinary album was recorded in Siberian and European cities" between 1996 and 2001 by Tim Hodgkinson, Ken Hyder and Gendos Chamzyryn, who together mark out the enigmatic K Space

Chamzyryn, from Tuva, is a deep vocal overtone singer, a bona fide Siberian shaman, excavating inner sanctum vibrations from the body's secret recesses Itinerant improvisors Hodgkinson and Hyder first encountered him while visiting a remote rural community during one of their Radical Transcultural Initiatives expeditions. Their subsequent collusion has produced the phenomenon they call 'sham beat', musical procedures that bring to light ancient energies within the ultra-modern Hodgkinson's tools are a lapsteel guitar, alto sax clarinet and electronics Hyder wields electronics and samples as well as drumming, singing and playing an amplified ektara (a single-stringed Indian instrument) Chamzyryn plays percussion, piano amplified doshpuluur (a three stringed Tuvan banjo) and summons up the invisible powers

At a guess, "Magnetic Fields" alludes to André Breton and Philippe Soupault's *Les Champs Magnetiques* (1919), a proto-Surreal st text generated by automatic writing in a state that approximated trance, because it couldn't possibly refer to the arch New York group of the same name *Bear Bones* certainly suggests suspension of rational norms resulting in uncanny music that is beguilingly strange yet unnervingly familiar At times it locks into regular incantatory rhythms, elsewhere sounds are combined according to some ritual that is inexplicable to the uninitiated It's out there in Kozyrev space where the time flow assists telepathy Get mystified. Get excited. There's laughter in there too

WOLF KRAKOWSKI
GORYL: DESTINY
TZADIK TZ7166 CD

BY JOHN CRATCHLEY

Singing in his mame-loshn, or mother tongue of Yiddish Wolf Krakowski presents a set of post-Holocaust songs mostly of unremitting mournfulness, as part of Tzadik's Radical Jewish Culture series curated by John Zorn A trawl through the lyrics (albeit taken out of their proper context) might prove helpful *"Our lives are only empty dreams/Mindlessly rushing by"*, *"Weariness becomes weaner/At the threshold of a house"*, *"Over there the Jews live in peace/Over there were oppressed"*, *"Who knows? Will a time come/And the two of us be separated/And never see each other again?"* A song called "Hundert" is credited to an anonymous concentration camp inmate.

Krakowski's point is clear Here are songs of obvious poignancy, written for the most part by artists whose histories are unknown to a wider culture, which he feels deserve presentation with full honours. Their broader, universal appeal on humanitarian grounds may well be obscured by the almost impossible task of rendering their full impact in any other language but Yiddish.

Krakowski's voice has been likened to both Tom Waits and Leonard Cohen but isn't as subtle as either of them, and he also lacks their penchant for irony He has a good delivery, enhanced by the album's theatrical, almost cabaret style arrangements This is a concept album of sorts The title, *Goryl: Destiny*, provides its thread It follows an earlier Tzadik release, *Transmigrations Gilgul* Backed by his regular group, The Lonesome Brothers, who comprise Jim Armenti on guitars mandolin, violin, balalaika and batar, Ray Mason on bass guitar and Tom Shea on drums, Krakowski puts a contemporary gloss on a strongly traditional form His style has been described as "Yiddish blues". Be they traditional or contemporary, however, the blues function to relieve misery by exorcising demons and taking understanding of the human condition to an altogether different level Both in the lyrics and Krakowski's delivery entrench *Goryl* firmly in that misery. If he is breaking with tradition here, Krakowski's demeanour is nothing if not respectful of his heritage and understanding of its modern historical context

CHRIS MANN AND THE USE
CHRIS MANN AND THE USE
LOVELY MUSIC L3091 CD

BY JULIAN COWLEY

Enthusiastic endorsement from John Cage helped to boost the reputation of poet Chris Mann, but the mere sound of his voice is enough to persuade that something out of the ordinary is taking place in his work. Mann is Australian and he delivers his text "at racetrack commentary speed" in a consciously exaggerated accent, as Nicholas Zurbrugg observes in *The Parameters Of Postmodernism*. The words often gush, accused of talking too fast, Mann retorts that we listen "too slow" Supercharged antipodean drawl and twang heighten the articulation, adding bold outline to each surge, dip and swerve of the voice.

At first hearing, Mann sounds rooted in dada chewing up language, the vehicle of reason, spewing it out in an act of starkly physical expulsion But speeded up listening reveals more complex modes of expression, oblique narratives studded with weighty pronouncements and cracking with lively humour. The new CD lends a welcome hand in the form of printed text Statements like "A noun is a dead idea. It can't afford the past" echo Gertrude Stein's prose, but Mann also has a taste for the malleability of polysyllables Composing with words, his agitated syntax makes for a prickly, wriggling music. His delivery at times recalls Robert Ashley, another virtuoso speaker, whose operas elaborate the sound of speech.

Mann has participated in the improvising group Machine For Making Sense, alongside violinist Stevie Wishart, saxophonist Jim Denley and the electronics of Rik Rue. He has also worked with Rue in The Impediments Here, he is joined by percussionist Jim Pugliesi and by a group including turntablist Christian Marclay and organist Anthony Coleman. The musicians supply sensitive and effective punctuation but Mann occupies centre stage

ROSCOE MITCHELL & THE NOTE FACTORY
SONG FOR MY SISTER
PI RECORDINGS PI03 CD

BY ANDY HAMILTON

Formed in 1992, Roscoe Mitchell's nine piece Note Factory issued its first recording on Black Saint; more recently came *Nine To Get Ready* on ECM. The dark and foreboding tone of the new album is characteristic of Mitchell's work as leader Within this ethos, though, there's a great variety of approaches, from free thrashes to contemporary classical-sounding pieces This formation of the Note Factory is notable for its channel separated dual rhythm sections of Vijay Iyer, Leon Dorsey and Vincent Davis, and Craig Taborn, Janbu Shahid and Gerald Cleaver Spencer Barefield on guitar and Corey Wilkes on trumpet complete the line up, while the leader excercises his multi instrumental prowess on soprano, alto and tenor saxes, flute, bass and contrabass recorder

Mitchell is an original and compelling composer – in fact, I'd rate him higher as composer than improvisor Dedicating the new album in memory of his sister, the title track provides a lugubrious counterpart to Horace Silver's Blue Note classic *Song For My Father*. "The Megaplexian" was written for alto sax and gamelan orchestra, and features pointilistic tintinnabulous effects involving percussion and piano. Composed for avant garde vocalist Thomas Buckner, "this" has a European chamber feel loosely connected with jazz The same goes for "Wind Change" On "Step One, Two, Three", an obsessive descending motif is set incongruously but effectively against an eccentric march shuffle rhythm. Superbly recorded, on *Song For My Sister* Roscoe Mitchell transcends the exclusive club of jazz composers

MOSES TAIWA MOLELEKWA
WA MPONA
MELT BWSA2281 CD

BY MARTIN LONGLEY

Along wait separated this South African keyboardist's UK debut *Finding One's Self* (1994) and its successor *Genes And Spirits* (2000) A year later, on 13 February 2001, Molelekwa and his manager wife's bodies were found in their offices. The circumstances of their deaths are still being investigated Molelekwa was barely 28 The MELT label's owner Robert Trunz had heard him by chance, back in 1993, while taking an outdoor breather from an Airto & Flora Purim gig in Johannesburg The next night, he offered Molelekwa a recording deal Moses had started young, playing beside Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela But his recorded works were few, as this patchwork set attests. It compiles alternate versions of tracks from his solo albums and a collaboration with Barungwa, plus remixes and live recordings, in an attempt to tie up the stray ends of his skimpy catalogue There are also guest showings from Irakere's Chucho Valdes, Byron Walen and Chris Bowden

It's hard to resist mentioning Abdullah Ibrahim or Chris McGregor when describing Molelekwa's playing, although his style involves the updating of acoustic township jazz with synthesizers and programming If these attempts are often quite elementary a few ill-chosen keyboard sounds can't mask the organic qualities of Molelekwa's playing The results are better when Ashley Beedle steps in to remix "Spirits Of Tembisa" Its skipping pulse skims breath holding strings on course for a stuttering percussion break scattered across a wide stereo field By contrast an acoustic piano solo, "BoMolelekwa", and a pure quintet performance by Ntata Mohlomo are eloquently flowing

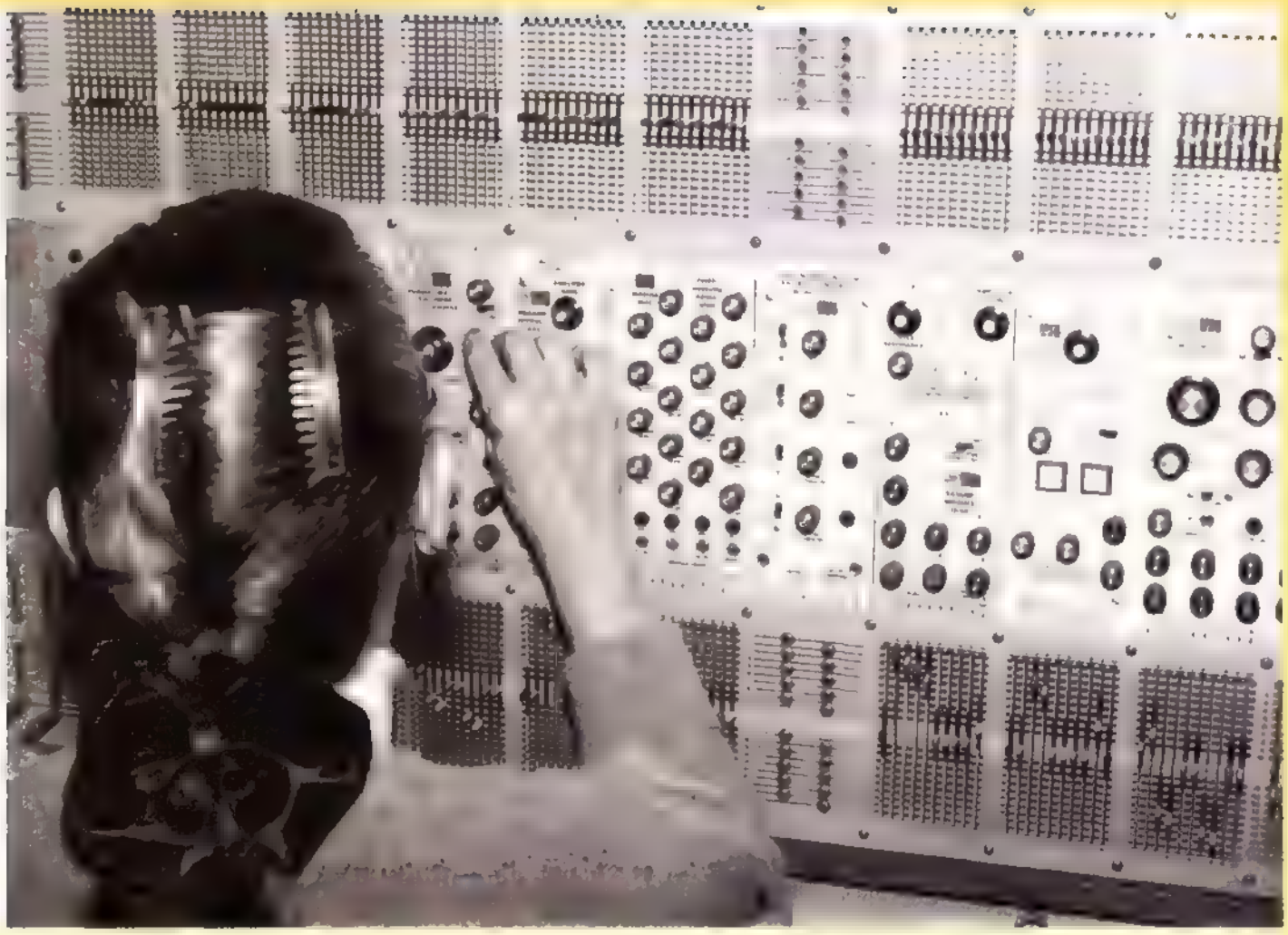
NETTLE
BUILD A FORT, SET THAT ON FIRE
THEAGRICULTURE AG016 CD

BY KEN HOLLINGS

Unafraid of the bold gesture, the sweeping line and the outer perimeter, Jace Clayton, aka DJ/Rupture, makes serious play with ideas that work best hidden in plain sight. You either have to ignore them or start thinking Working with Spanish artist DD as Nettle the fresh, disruptive 12"s he's been releasing over the past 18 months parallel DJ/Rupture's *Gold Teeth Thief* and *Minesweeper Suite* multigenre pile ups. Some of this material has now been brought together for this exceptional CD collection dedicated to the shifting street music of North Africa southern Spain and the wider diaspora.

Mutable and pervasive, half heard in the background noise of bars and public squares or pulsating from basement windows and the impenetrable interior of cruising cars, this is a sound that crosses entire continents Stretching scraping and scratching, Nettle are capable of reacting simultaneously to the detail and the bigger picture Form is protean and malleable, and beats are revealed as basic units of measurement that refuse to remain constant, as there's nothing fixed for them to be set against The rhythm is present, strong and supple and unadorned, but it's also rendered strange The effect is a little like catching a pirate HipHop radio station late at night for the first time, crackling with static clinging to the airwaves and demanding to be heard "Serranito" reaches back to the ruffhouse experimentalism of the Ultramagnetic MCs and forward to the deterritorialised weightless possibilities of the laptop "The End Of Public Space", created with radio artist Gregory Whitehead, takes equal bytes out of Eazy-E and the musical culture of Morocco Nettle's collaboration with Boston's ESP on the extended "They" pitches schoolyard noise, looped and stepped up, over tight, fleshless percussion and subsonic bass before allowing the whole structure to dissolve into overloaded delay

Time to tear up those old maps of influence, development and change. It looks like we won't be needing them again this century.



Julian Cowley is mesmerised by a box set of Eliane Radigue's time-bending electronica

"Accessing the flesh of sounds": Eliane Radigue at work, 1950s

ELIANE RADIGUE
ADNOS I-III
TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS SWC55 3XCD

Eliane Radigue's music stands alongside that of La Monte Young and Phill Niblock in its sensitive and uncompromising minimalism. During the 1950s, the Parisian composer trained at Radio France's Studio d'Essai under the direction of electroacoustic pioneers Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry. She then became Henry's assistant at Studio Apsome before charting her own musical course away from his overt influence. Out of her early immersion in musique concrète, Radigue carried away a respect for sounds in themselves and a fascination with the way they behave in combination.

For the past 30 years she has used a vintage ARP analogue synthesizer to generate waves that hover and glide with otherworldly luminosity. Over the course of an hour or so, it becomes simply mesmerising. The synthesizer, she told me in conversation in 1999 (*The Wire* 180), grants her "access within the flesh of the sounds", but her investigations reach conclusions that are mystical rather than surgical in character. Electronic sonorities, in her hands, may appear transcendental, environmental or corporeal but they never sound cold or clinically studio-bound. Composer Tom Johnson wrote perceptively on Radigue's music in New York's *Village Voice* back in the early 1970s, and later remarked that she has been making the same piece throughout her life. When I put this to her, she readily concurred: "There is not that much difference between one work and another, no more than from the beginning of any one of my pieces to the end. It is never exactly the same, for sure, but it's never totally different." Her singlemindedness is a great strength. The signature is instantly recognisable but each work makes its own disclosures and exercises its own hypnotic power. Certainly Radigue's music has not suffered from over-exposure and the slow capture of her oeuvre on CD is a major ongoing event.

Rhys Chatham, who came to know Radigue during the year she spent at the electronic music centre of New York University, supplies illuminating sleevenotes for this box set. He explains that the title couples the Latin 'ad' meaning 'towards', with 'nos' meaning 'us'. 'Nos' also puns on the Greek 'noos', meaning consciousness. Or, as Radigue translates it, "the Universal from which everything comes". Reconciliation of the one and the many (that fundamental goal of mystical activity) provides a conceptual umbrella for this tripartite composition in which each sound continuum hosts multiple events.

The *Adnos* trilogy was realised between 1973 and 1980. Listening to *Adnos I* (1973-74) is rather like peering through the indistinctness of a cloud to watch patterned motion of mysterious figures on a distant high plateau. Radigue handles indistinct materials in ways that are vividly suggestive despite their lack of brilliance. Gonglike sonorities occasionally break through the muffled drone, but for all its hints of regularity the piece implies suspension of time as a measurable phenomenon. Its duration becomes a quality of experience rather than a quantity calculable in minutes and seconds. In 1975 Radigue became a student of Tibetan Buddhism. Her engagement with its disciplines is reflected in the important large-scale compositions *Songs Of Milarepa* (1981-83) (Lovely Music 2001) and *Trilogie De La Mort* (1985-93), released on XI in 1998). *Adnos I* predates this involvement, but suggests that she was already well attuned to the spirit of Tibetan Buddhist meditative practices and its cosmology.

Adnos II is far more obviously agitated and more varied in texture, with more explicit changes through time. A drone formed from interlacing pulses eventually becomes suggestive of biorhythms, the weave of heartbeat, blood throb and ticking nerves. There's a shift from the earlier piece's atemporality into biometric time, with asymmetrical transformations of repetitive figures that may recall Terry Riley's patterned improvisations, and confrontational vibrations that are worthy of Tony Conrad. Radigue still steers clear of clean sounds, but this piece collapses the distance that gives *Adnos I* its enticingly remote character. *Adnos II* has an inner life of raw physical immediacy, yet remains essentially contemplative beyond its surface turbulence.

The opening of *Adnos III* resembles deep, monkish chanting with crossing waves evoking the pulsation of an organism. After 11 minutes a tick-tock ostinato cuts a path through the low drone, intensifying in shriliness until it sounds like an emergency siren or alarm. WB Yeats, meditating on art and life in his poem "Byzantium", eventually turns his attention from a golden bird, symbolising timeless artifice, to the "gong-tormented" (ie, timebound) sea of history. Radigue here gives the impression she's thrusting out of contemplative seclusion towards the world of everyday crises. At length, however, serenity is restored, its reconciliation effected within a long and gently undulating stream of sound that finally fades away. Whatever symbolic resonance the piece may have (and Radigue invariably resorts to some metaphorical framework to kickstart the process of composition), it's the sounds that ultimately matter to her: their nature, how they act. Electronic music and drone music may easily lapse into empty styles, devoid of real content. Radigue's inspired minimalism, on the other hand, is grounded in the old-fashioned synthesizer that is her sound source. She uses its intrinsic graininess, its sweep and roar, to envelop the ascetic within the aesthetic and draw the static towards the ecstatic.

Genius or goof. Al Neil (above, centre) and (right) abusing the piano during the late 60s

Newly discovered recordings reveal the little known Canadian pianist Al Neil as a nonconformist on a par with Sun Ra, says Bill Shoemaker

AL NEIL TRIO
RETROSPECTIVE 1965-1968
BLUE MINOR 1212001 2XCD

Now approaching 80, Al Neil is a singular figure in the history of Canadian jazz and improvised music. Originally a bebop pianist, he was in on the 1949 creation of the legendary Vancouver club, the Cellar, which has a permanent, if parenthetical place in jazz history for the being the site of Ornette Coleman's first gig outside the US. As house pianist, Neil honed his skills backing the likes of Harold Land, Art Pepper and other itinerant frontmen throughout the 50s. The first extant hint of his conceptualist tendencies was his contribution to the Beat poetry and jazz fusion movement on the 1959 Folkways LP, *Kenneth Patchen Reads Poetry In Canada With The Alan Neil Quartet*, which gained the pianist his first notoriety beyond Vancouver. Yet, even this cross platform collaboration did not foreshadow the frontiers he traversed during the mid- and late 1960s, an odyssey well documented on *Retrospective 1965-1968*.

Neil's explorations of free jazz, sound collages, sound texts and Firesign Theatre-like comedy during this period coincided with his ongoing work in assemblage and two-dimensional collage, the subject of a Vancouver Art Gallery retrospective several years ago. For his first meeting with drummer Gregg Simpson and bass player Richard Anstey (both of whom were 19), Neil brought scores made from notation paper and magazine cut-outs. Unsurprisingly, his acknowledged influences on this aspect of his work were William Burroughs and Kurt Schwitters. Arguably, the wild card among Neil's extramusical inspirations is Antonin Artaud, which would at least partially account for his fevered piano style, especially since he had not yet heard Cecil Taylor. Whether he was pummelling the keyboard or improvising an absurdly funny narrative, the self-immolating aesthetic of the ecstatic visionary French actor-theorist dovetailed with the mind-expanding agenda of the psychedelic era, the necessary cultural catalyst for Neil's work gaining traction with his trio mates' generation.

Plugged into an emergent Vancouver scene of musicians, dancers, poets, film makers and light show artists, Neil's Trio (who took on monikers like Al Neil And His Royal Rascals for their gigs at Simpson's storefront multimedia studio, The Sound Gallery) soon found themselves opening for Janis Joplin and Big Brother & The Holding Company during Vancouver's Trips Festival of 1966, a three day event whose fare spanned The Grateful Dead and poet Michael McClure. "I'm going beyond bebop," Neil dryly told *Coda* magazine in 1966. On some counts, he was going beyond early 60s free jazz on a trajectory only roughly paralleled by Sun Ra. Simultaneously, at a time when John Cage and Karlheinz Stockhausen were still wearing jackets and ties, Neil was often using sound art as a Merry Prank.

From the outset of this collection, it is obvious that Anstey and Simpson were kindred spirits and exceptional instrumentalists with a hearty appetite for experimental techniques and technology. On their respective solos on the earliest track, the lengthy, "Summertime"-like "Dreamers Exposed" from late 1965, the pair demonstrate a maturity well beyond their years. Simpson combines an Elvin Jones-derived power with rim effects that would soon be in vogue with first generation European free improvisors. Anstey uses glissading chords to fluidly pivot between chromatic and motivic materials. More importantly, Anstey and Simpson complement the veering Neil, instead of attempting to closely follow him. The cohesion of Neil's Trio stemmed from this elasticity, and was a prerequisite for subsequent recordings.

The acoustic tracks from 1966 and 67 find the trio moving further away from the full throttle energy shaping "Dreamers Exposed", instead opting for a ruminative interplay. The idiosyncratic ebb and flow of Neil's solos on tracks like "Mallets" and "Zen Ballad" presage the more polished technique employed by a later Vancouver pianist, Paul Plimley, whose first recording was with the Simpson-propelled NOW Quintet more than a decade later. Part of Anstey and Simpson's response to this change was an increased emphasis on extended techniques ranging from reversing the bow in order to achieve percussive effects, to rubbing cymbals to produce surreal washes. While the results sometimes intersected Sun Ra's spacy impressionism of the early and mid 60s, there are enough differences to conclude that Neil was his own man, as they used to say.

Much of the retrospective's second disc is devoted to sound collages, which generally combine layers of altered kitsch music sources, improvised materials by Anstey and Simpson, and Neil's narratives. While tracks like "Horse Opera" – set promisingly on the LBJ ranch, Neil's narrative becomes convoluted and ultimately rather indulgent – are best heard as time capsule items, Neil could also be pithy, as he demonstrates on "Blindfold Test", an occasionally sidesplitting send up of the *"Dead Beat Magazine"* blindfold record test. Still, the intent of these pieces was not the making of serious, institutionally recognised art. Rather, these are documents of three friends experimenting with retooled technology (such as the crude mixer Simpson made from a telephone switcher), and mooning the establishment on pieces like "Snedenko", which they named after a rabidly zealous Vancouver narcotics detective.

A most welcomed and necessary document, *Retrospective 1965-1968* confirms Neil's status as a Canadian original, whose passionate abandon blurred the line between genius and goof.

PHILL NIBLOCK
G2,44+1X2
MOIKAI M12 CD

BY JULIAN COWLEY

Phill Niblock would like you to play this VERY loud. "If the neighbors don't complain before the piece ends, it's probably not loud enough," he suggests, adding archly, "The ones that live a mile down the road, that is." But don't expect a blitz of dissonant noise — any community submerged beneath this luscious, overtone laden swarm of droning electric guitar sounds ought to wear a beatific smile. Niblock chose the notes he required, asked guitarist friends to repeat them, took samples and built a 24 track mix from them on a computer. The result is a floating world of radiant hum despite its density. The players were composer David First, Robert Poss and Susan Stenger from Band Of Susans, and Portuguese musician Rafael Toral.

Stenger has appeared on previous Niblock recordings, playing flute on "Early Winter" (on XI 111 CD) and on the album *Four Full Flutes* (XI 101 CD), where she duets with her SEM Ensemble associate Petr Kotik. Given to working with live as well as recorded sound, Niblock invited Toral to play over the carefully processed piece. The "Toral Version" is accompanied here by a "Massed Version" with two live parts each contributed by Robert Poss, Kevin Drumm, Lee Ranaldo, Thurston Moore and Alan Licht, the final mix courtesy of Jim O Rourke. Here, Niblock's blissed out swarm is magnified into a fully fledged heavenly music squadron. About his own music, David First once wrote "My ultimate wish is to transport an audience to the realm of pure feeling." Niblock's music comes close to that goal with these two realisations of "Guitars Too, For Four". Play it loud and the glorious drone formation offers sensory airlift.

TARA JANE O'NEIL
THE JOY OF...
EDICIONES ACUARELA NOIS031 CD

TARA JANE O'NEIL & DANIEL LITTLETON
MUSIC FOR A METEOR SHOWER
TIGER STYLE STS028 CD/2XLP

BY DAVID KEENAN

The recent string of solo releases by Tara Jane O'Neil, former bassist and vocalist of Louisville's Rodan, have seen her solidify her take on narcotic American folk. *The Joy Of...*, a new four track EP featuring cellist Noel Hawley, is her most significant release to date, showcasing a spectral outsider voice as beautiful as that of the late singer-songwriter Judee Sill. Indeed, the EP's numb, blue-black glow shadows the emotional freefall of Sill's enigmatic pair of albums, 1971's *Judee Sill* and 73's *Heart Food*.

The sound is murky on "If Your Youth Is Green", where piano and electric guitar coat the acoustic like dew, while O'Neil's voice hangs suspended above a tape machine whorling in reverse. The song is propelled by a dream logic, blurring childhood remembrances into symbolic, pantheistic imagery. The acoustic reading of "High Wire" is just as autumnal, reporting memories filled with the shadows of mountains. It segues into the low level electronic drone of "All Jewels Redux", which occasionally sparks into little energetic paroxysms. Despite its retitling as "Ahn Fahr", her cover of Bruce Springsteen's "I'm On Fire" is reverential, right down to the martial backbeat, although the stripped down combination of echoed keyboard and ghost voices relocates it to Springsteen's bleak *Nebraska*.

Music For A Meteor Shower is a mainly instrumental collaboration between O'Neil and Dan Littleton of the New York-based folk pop trio Ida. Recorded in two long improvisatory sessions, the first beneath a storm of meteors, it works as a slow soundtrack to the celestial fireworks above. Trails of muzzy acoustic guitar recall the poetics of space of Loren Mazzacane or late-period John Fahey. They also drop in some forlorn, dancing jazz figures, celestial vibes and a breathy Jacques Brel-styled duet.

JOHN PARISH
HOW ANIMALS MOVE
THRILL JOCKEY 110 CD

BY PHILIP CLARK

Guitarist and drummer John Parish is still best known for his work with PJ Harvey, or as the man who scored Patrice Toye's 1999 film *Rosie*. As with many backroom operators, he had a great solo project waiting in the shadows, and here it is: a graceful, judiciously assembled selection of jottings that offset their inherent pastoralism with a combination of gentle charm and dry wit.

Parish was brought up in the West Country, and *How Animals Move* follows a tradition in English art for pared down, slightly kooky observations. His melodic lines recall the homespun vision of painters like Edward Burra and Stanley Spencer. There's something of The Penguin Cafe Orchestra about his larger pieces, except his travel further and they sidestep being quirky for quirky's sake.

The tracks for large ensemble (which includes members of Portishead) at the core of the album are enchanting. "Westward Airways" is a fascinating brew of interlocking contributions from cornet, violin and guitars that marches forward with bright optimism. "Bernadette" and "Stable Life" use the same instrumental combination to back David Donahue's spoken words. The former is shaken up by sudden edits, while the latter's melodic twists and turns are cushioned by seamlessly knitted harmonies.

The CD opens with a short, folksy violin solo by Clare Mactaggart, presaging a procession of fulsome miniatures that punctuate the ensemble pieces. "El Merreon" features Pat MacDonald's smoky harmonica, "Shrunken Man" builds from a tender guitar riff, and "Without Warning His Heart Stopped Beating" is a resourceful if unholy alliance of flugelhorn and violin. Polly Harvey turns up for a final blues, closing a highly engaging and very endearing album.

PARKINS/CLINE/MOORE
LIVE AT EAST HAMPTON TOWN HALL
JMZ JMZ002 CD

OPUS
THREE INCREDIBLE IDEAS
AUDITORIUM 8030037 00301 CD

BY JOHN CRATCHLEY

If Thurston Moore is the common denominator of these two live trio recordings, he is also the key to them. On one, he is the grit in the oyster that makes it a pearl; on the other, the same grit becomes a minor irritant. In collaboration with Zeena Parkins and Nels Cline, he is buoyant and integrated; with Walter Prati and Giancarlo Schiaffini in Opus, he sounds inhibited.

The balance of the East Hampton set is impressive. Recorded in the middle of a short tour in January 2001, Parkins, Cline and Moore are all open to the moment, at ease and in control. The music is hardly groundbreaking, and much of it wouldn't sound out of place alongside Sonic Youth's *Murray Street* abstractions. That's a compliment, by the way. Parkins has the least pronounced input, or at least it's difficult to pick her out during Moore and Cline's more extreme clangfests. Unsurprisingly, her electric harp works better in quieter, more introspective moments, yet you always sense her moderating presence. Moore provides his characteristic chiming sonorities, as is piles up echoing and resounding layers of taut steel sound. Dirtier and grungier, Cline's playing acts as his earthier counterpart, and together they work up some spectacular crescendos. When they subside, however, Parkins is there to regroup the trio.

Cline also comes into his own with some extremely accomplished sound manipulations. Of the three, he strives hardest for transcendence. Parkins lends structural significance, and Moore provides the sonic bricks and mortar. Their democratic division of labour results in music with grace, integrity and harmony.

Moore plays guitar augmented with electronic devices in Walter Prati's Opus trio. Giancarlo Schiaffini plays trombone and electronics, and Prati plays cello, six string electric bass and a Kyma workstation. One of New Music's more delicate improvisors, Prati's work with Evan Parker's Electro-Acoustic Ensemble broke new ground in real time sound manipulation. Schiaffini too has obviously read the brief, but it's a pity that nobody showed Moore the small print. Schiaffini's sometimes wonderfully muted but always fluid, skittering trombone sets the tone, and Prati brings his processed cello into play on a careful, delicate improvisation. In this setting, Moore's familiar noise patterns feel somewhat out of place. Far from pushing his collaborators into different territory, it sits foursquare as an intrusion. This is evident in Prati's attempt to recover his initial position with a fine cello workout that displays amazing textural variation in its amplified and echoed string squeaks, as he immediately samples them to great effect. As hard as he tries Moore can't find an appropriate context. A not unusual occurrence in improvisation. Prati and Schiaffini aim to be inclusive, but sometimes empathy can go astray. To his credit, Moore realises what's not happening, and *Three Incredible Ideas* mostly downsizes to two players.

PIERANUNZI/JOHNSON/BARON
PLAY MORRICONE
CAMJAZZ CAMJ77502 CD

BY ANDY HAMILTON

"Surprised, in admiration, the original pieces, rediscovered and respected, have a new physiognomy, and the jazz interpretation of the three great soloists doesn't destroy the pieces but values them," praised Ennio Morricone, in response to these trio interpretations of his film music. The CD lives up his endorsement.

During the 70s and 80s, Italian jazz pianist Pieranunzi worked as a studio musician on dozens of Morricone soundtracks. Now he plays in what he calls "the trio of my heart", with Marc Johnson on bass and Joey Baron on drums. Like

EELS, SPARKLEHORSE, GOLDFRAPP, PJ HARVEY COLLABORATOR & PRODUCER **JOHN PARISH** COMES FORTH WITH A DEBUT ALBUM OF CINEMATIC & POWERFUL SONGS YOU ALWAYS KNEW WHO HE WAS AND NOW YOU KNOW WHO HE IS ON CD AND LIMITED VINYL.
HOW ANIMALS MOVE THRILL-110

SUE GARNER SPOTLIGHTS HER SINGULAR TALENT AND SKILL. ***SHADYSIDE*** THRILL 112 LP/CD

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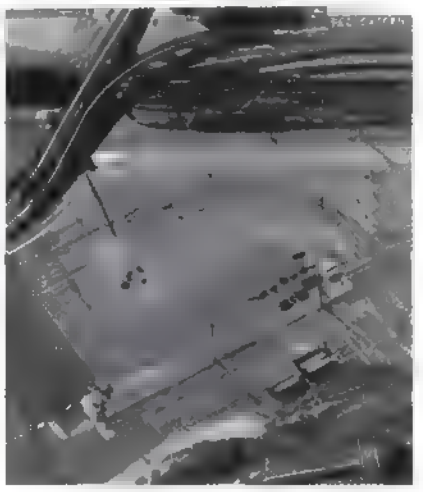

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The Compiler

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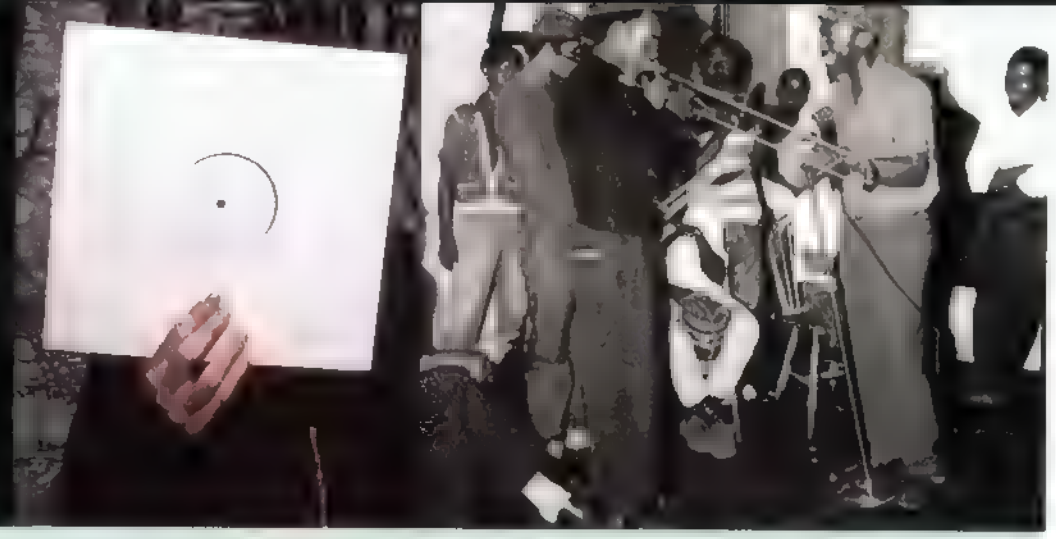


Monster mash-ups: Richard X (left); Don Drummond with Clement 'Coxsone' Dodd

Cheesy, passé, 'anyone can do it', whatever you want to call it, the bootleg/mash-up craze isn't going anywhere soon. With the entertainment industry's (and their toadies on Capitol Hill) mind-boggling response to file sharing – umm, I didn't go to business school, but I'm pretty sure that they don't teach you that the best way to shore up market share in a shaky economy is to attempt to criminalise your customers – the cut up is the inevitable response. Boom Selection (boomselection.info) has been the online headquarters for the British bootlegging community for the better part of a year now and the guys behind it have just released ***Never Mind The Bootlegs*** (Boom Selection BS0001 3XMP3CD), a staggering triple MP3 CD collection of some 430 examples of the cut 'n' paste aesthetic from Culturcide to Richard X. Not only are there hundreds and hundreds of bootlegs, mash-ups, plagiarhythms, whatever you want to call 'em, there are mixes from DJ Shadow (a snippet from *Product Placement*), Soulwax (a different mix from the *Too Many DJs* album), The Avalanches, etc. Inevitably, there are some real stinkers in here and you've got to wonder why tracks like Gloria Jones's original version of "Tainted Love", Dolly Parton's "9 To 5" and Simon & Garfunkel's "59th Street Bridge Song" are included here, but this is an amazing artefact, a certain future collector's item and an awesome achievement. (PS)

Studio One Scorcher (Soul Jazz SJR67 CD/LP) is the fifth in Soul Jazz's Studio One series, following their *Rockers*, *Roots*, *DJs* and *Soul* collections. The quality just keeps getting better as the vaults of Clement 'Coxsone' Dodd are finally prised all the way open. In this collection of classic reggae instrumentals we find the lifeblood of a genre that has developed locally and spread internationally, with its greatest musicians, writers and arrangers at their shining peak – nowhere better displayed than when old spars Ernest Ranglin and Jackie Mittoo reinvent the old hymn "Jericho" for playback as the achingly funky "Jerico Rock", or when the immortal trombone player Don Drummond steps forward and swings into the magical "Heaveniess", here in its extended version. It's wonderful stuff all the way. (SB)

Trojan are now coming in at us from every angle. ***Punky Reggae Party: New Wave Jamaica 1975-80*** (Trojan TJDDD040 2XCD) is a demographic slice in time pitched at late 70s youth, the most 'successful' of whom are now probably using quality roots reggae as a background to their latest ad campaign. However, it would be churlish to suggest that this double CD is anything other than an excellent compilation; it will even outlive the concept. There's little to appeal to veteran reggae fans despite the inclusion of some nice tunes that are rarely spotted these days, primarily a pre-Black Uhuru Michael Rose displaying stunning form in his Dennis Brown 'tribute', "Key Of Keys". The set also has the prosaically titled "African Dub", which is one of the Upsetter's greatest dub outings as he takes The Silvertones' "Rejoice Jah Jah Children" deep into inner space. The art of sleevenote writing is taken to new vernacular extremes by The Stranglers' Jean-Jacques Burnel, who refreshingly admits to never getting his head around dubbing his own tunes while confessing his love for the genre. (SB)

Proper Records has been issuing favourably priced compilations of historically important material that has slipped into the public domain for a couple of years now. Perhaps the best of the recent crop is ***Good News: 100 Gospel Greats*** (Proper PROPERBOX42 4XCD), a wonderful, if not quite miraculous, testament of God's greatest gift to the world. Covering gospel's age from the jubilee quartets of the 1920s to the male vocal groups of the 50s, *Good News* is an almost perfect survey of the fount of contemporary popular music. As is the case with all the best religious music, epiphanies abound: The Golden Gate Jubilee Quartet's utterly delightful "Golden Gate Gospel Train", The Trumpeteers' eternal version of "Milky White Way", The Dixie Hummingbirds' definitive "Amazing Grace", Sister Rosetta Tharpe's uncharacteristically jaunty arrangement of Thomas Dorsey's old chestnut "Precious Lord Take My Hand", Mahalia Jackson's bone rattling "Move On Up A Little Higher", Dorothy Love Coates's feverish "Get Away Jordan", the all too rarely compiled Soul Stirrers material with the great tenor and arranger RH Harris, and the presence of the greatest shouter of them all, Archie Brownlee of The Five Blind Boys Of Mississippi. You could carp about the lack of the Swan Silvertones, Clara Ward or Marion Williams, and you could say that they spend too much time on the jubilee style (almost two discs), but with this retailing around £10 with comprehensive notation by Joop Visser, it would be sacrilege to complain too much. (PS)

A Cage Went In Search Of A Bird (Somnimage SOMN0004 CD) assembles 17 pieces inspired by Jewish Czech modernist Franz Kafka, whose declared purpose in writing was to externalise his "dreamlike inner life". Musicians from America, Australia, England, Mexico and Japan respond with suitable evocations. Surrealist Christian Faur did the artwork. Mara's Torment provide Popol Vuh-like oneiric drift; Attrition's viola and electronics capture poignancy within the grotesqueness of "Metamorphosis", Loren Jan Wilson II and Ryoji Furui's costive electronica suggests oppressive mechanisms, Halo Skycrash summon up strained ranting and the thud of the totalitarian heel; Chagas engineer macabre savagery, Shinjuku Thief and Chthonic Force enact painful psychodramas, Remora extract a tortured grimace from scraped metal, EA Zanni lards doom upon gloom. There's plenty of variety in the remaining darkwave excavations of alienation and foreboding, although resilient humour, one of Kafka's key qualities, is regrettably in short supply. (JC)

During the 1970s, under Robert Ashley's stewardship, the Centre for Contemporary Music at Mills College, Oakland, California adopted the motto "If you're not weird, get out!" Current co-directors Maggi Payne and Chris Brown appear less provocative, but the Centre remains an adventurous musical environment, as can be heard from the electroacoustic pieces gathered on ***Oasis*** (Music From Mills 2001 004 CD). Payne's "Breaks/Motors" is characteristically panoramic in expanse although its sources are a tiny motor and noises found in breaks between movements on old recordings. Brown's "Knottyspine" is a manic pinball game of skidding and bouncing blips and whirrs. Fred Frith, currently Professor of Composition at Mills, is represented by three elegant excerpts from his dance-theatre piece *Sideshow*, mixing violin, guitars and percussion with samples of voices and street noise from Marseille. Deep Listener and occasional professor Pauline Oliveros improvises "Continuing Variations" on electronically enhanced accordion. "Immaterial States" by John Bischoff (the Centre's studios coordinator) is a rising and falling computer-etched diagram elaborated from a whispered text. For "Spare Ribs And Short Circuits", long-term Mills associate Alvin Curran mixes fabulously diverse samples from his own rich oeuvre in "an outer batch of hyperactive electronic sourdough". (JC)

Booniay!! (Afrodisiac 9046 CD), a superb compilation of funk and Afrobeat from West Africa, has been out for a while in the States but has only just made its way over here. Yes, there's something very Dr Livingstone about Western collectors strip-mining Africa for rare funk gems and then fleecing funk obsessives with neither the cash nor the get-up-and-go to do it themselves, but at least it looks as though all the tracks here have been properly licensed. And what tracks they are: William Onyeabor's Afro-disco trance epic "Body And Soul", the justly celebrated Matata's preposterous dance craze "Good Samaritan", the sweet highlife that mutates into Hammond freakout of George Darquah, Atomic Bomb Zigoto living up to their name on "Menyeckse". (PS)

Ice-T Presents Westside (Obsessive EVS32 2XCD/3XLP) is an opportunity missed. It presents itself as the definitive history of West Coast HipHop, and while it does an admirable job in showcasing the transition from minimal electro jams (although there are no Cabbage Patch tunes) to the sound of glocks, drop tops, smashing Stides bottles, sirens and whirring chopper blades, there are some serious holes. Our hosts Dr Dre and Snoop Dogg are, naturally enough, represented by two tracks each, but where are The Unknown DJ, World Class Wreckin' Cru, NWA, Low Profile, JJ Fad, King Tee, Digital Underground, Alkaholiks, Freestyle Fellowship, Quannum? And what on earth are The Lost Boyz, a group from Queens, doing here? Nevertheless, while most of this is over familiar, if you haven't been introduced to the pleasures of Souls Of Mischief, E 40 and Rappin' 4-Tay, this is a good place to start. (PS)

Back in the day, we would have been calling ***Hidden People*** (Blue Juice BJ013 CD) TripHop. However, dope is not the operating principle, and instead of shying away from risk and retreating into the sampler, the producers here are aiming at a widescreen desert desolation – Ry Cooder with a crossfader instead of a slide. A couple of tracks (mostly just the interludes) err on the jazzy side, but tracks by Part 2, DJ Vadim, Agzilla-Deckwrecka, The Hermit, Runaways and DJ Spooky show that tumblin' tumbleweed has as much a place in the dub aesthetic as the demon weed. (PS)

The kind bud, however, plays a big part in ***Crooked: The Original Score*** (Wordsound WS042 CD), not to be confused with *Crooked. The Soundtrack. The Original Score* features all the incidental music from Wordsound's cinematic blockbuster that couldn't fit on to the soundtrack CD. Like the movie, the beats and pieces collected here are, with a couple of exceptions, resolutely low budget, lo-fi, lo-cal, if not necessarily lo qual, homemade, tinny and generally under produced. Whether or not the album makes a virtue out of the aesthetic is probably down to your tolerance for dubby HipHop heavily reliant on the abandoned harbour sound the label pioneered six years ago. (PS)

It's 2002 – do we still really need a collection like ***Female Of The Species Volume 2*** (Law & Auder Promo CD)? Much of the history of electronic music has been the history of composers in lab coats and producers in drag trying to escape the 'natural', the biological, the 'authentic', by means of timbres and rhythms that can't be found in the natural world. Of course, ever since the House revolution, this terrain has been hijacked by guys who in earlier years would have been in garage bands, spending their spare time on the beach kicking sand in the faces of seven stone weaklings. So maybe we do need compilations like this, except that you'd be hard pressed to find anything particularly 'female' about any of it, nice as most of it is. (PS) *Reviewed by Steve Barker, Julian Cowley and Peter Shapiro*

PHOTO: JOHNNY VOLCANO

Bill Evans and Keith Jarrett, Pieranunzi has the singing tone that comes from a classical background. His beautiful recent solo album, *Con Infinite Voci* on EGEA had a narrow emotional compass, the predominant mood introspective and melancholy, tempos mostly below medium, the feeling indefinably Mediterranean. In contrast to that album's infinite sadness, the Morricone tribute reveals a newfound exuberance. "La Voglia Matta" ("Crazy Desire") displays some of the pianist's most scintillating uptempo work. "Addio Fratello Crudele" has the pungency of one of his own beautifully sad compositions; "The Batchelor" displays a convincing bluesy funkiness unusual in a disciple of Bill Evans.

Pieranunzi has long been one of the finest solo jazz pianists and ballad players. Here, he develops his mastery in a trio and uptempo context, making him one of the most complete of keyboard improvisors.

JAMES PLOTKIN'S PHANTOMSMASHER
JAMES PLOTKIN'S PHANTOMSMASHER
IPECAC IPC31 CD

BY MARTIN LONGLEY

James Plotkin is a guitar noise veteran of Old, Khanate, Death Ambient and Atomsmasher, not to mention any number of Industrial, hardcore and Ambient encounters with John Zorn, Michael Gira, Mick Harris and others. Phantomsmasher succeed Atomsmasher with like spirited intensified guitar onslaughts subject to heavy computer warp. Though he's assisted by Dave Witte on drums and DJ Speedranch on Audiomulch vocals, Plotkin acts as a virtual one man band. It's hard to work out whether the drumming is real time or beats sicked up, looped and accelerated through a computer. Then, everything here is bastardised, stacked, condensed, jumpcut or perversely distorted.

Yet Phantomsmasher maintain the illusion of a sweaty group, albeit one made up of superhuman virtuosi. Speedranch projects an overload of stretched and mutated voices, but lets the hardman mask slip to drop in baby chuckles and toybox chimes at the end of "Bishop Hopping". It's not so horribly cute once its burbles have been tweaked to resemble the tones of Beelzebub. "Halibut Jones" is total mash up: "Slobtronic" luxuriates in the harmonised glory of glam Metal. "The Pelvic Thrust" is its black-clad Industrial apology, which takes out the earlier indiscretion in an implosion of drums and bass.

Plotkin's heavy riffing is all pervasive, but he slices away guitar cliches in the process of lopping and looping pay-off phrases from the amplified roar. His obsessive, microscopic doctoring of sound and spangled repeats produces the cumulative effect akin to a ramrod wielded by an articulate orator.

POP OFF TUESDAY
POP AHOY
PICKLED EGG NO NUMBER CD

BY FELIX CEMMELL

This third album from Japanese experimental pop duo Minori Odaira (vocals/guitars) and Hiroki Miyauchi (machines) is the work of a much more worldly pair than the personalities behind their 1999 self-titled debut, and the mini LP *See My Ghost*. The duo first met as classmates studying English in London. Their music rises out of the cultural slippage between Japanese and English sensibilities, which materialises as a pan-generic comedy of manners involving two great tea drinking nations.

Where their earlier records were marked by a 'stranger in a strange land' shyness and introspection, on *Pop Ahoy* they articulate their pointed cultural observations with confidence. Musically, the album pitches you into a carnival whirl of pop suffused with psychedelia in its many contemporary guises. Like Cornelius, the duo handle samples and noises like they were exciting new toys. Multiplying shiny washes of electronic overdubs, hypnotic, repetitive melodies and harmonious vocals, they trap listeners in a shimmering 'hall of mirrors' effect, where electronic fanfares harmonise with simple guitar licks and industrial noise. Their new daring pays off in the album's shameless fusion of dub, Krautrock, TripHop, 60s pop and electronica, and if its garish colours occasionally clash, well, what the hell.

Into the middle of "6/8 Sutra", for example, they inject an incredible groove that is so out of wack with its host body it could be Venusian. But somehow it invisibly undergoes a molecular realignment around the intruding element to make it work. The duo's method of coping with all this madness is to ingest it while keeping it whole. They blindly fuse the traditional and the contemporary in the same spirit of boundless optimism for its positive outcome. That spirit is Japanese pop's gift to the world.

PRIMAL SCREAM
EVIL HEAT
COLUMBIA 5089232 CD

BY DAVID KEENAN

Primal Scream records invariably function as cultural barometers, reflecting the grossest depths and, occasionally, the ecstatic highs of leftfield pop culture to such a degree that it's possible to predict exactly how a new record will sound just by wetting your finger and holding it up to the wind. It's mainly down to the fact that their records seem to be made more by a revolving committee of big name guests than a solid rock 'n' roll group. Every disc relies on the thumbprint of their various producers and mixers in order to establish a convincing sonic identity, and over the space of their schizophrenic back catalogue it's hard to figure out what the 'uncut' Primal Scream sound really is, although jangly early Creation singles like "All Fall Down" and "Crystal Crescent" are probably as close as we're likely to get. With *Evil Heat*, their first album for Columbia, you get the feeling that Bobby Gillespie and co could just as well have been partying and goin' crazy elsewhere, while Andy Weatherall, Kevin Shields and Jagz Kooner put the tracks together.

It opens with "Deep Hit Of Morning Sun", a swarm of phased electronics that gathers around a motif that could have been lifted from The Doors' "The End" before zooming to a Technicolor finish that recalls The Stones' "2000 Light Years From Home". Kevin Shields's mix does its best to envelop vocalist Bobby Gillespie's inevitable attempts to *"shine on"*, but the execrable lyric renders the whole thing brainless and stillborn. "Miss Lucifer", the single, is even worse, being the first of many tracks on *Evil Heat* that cross rock 'n' roll and electro, only to get Sigue Sigue Sputnik. It's also the first to wheel out Gillespie's endless variations on the *"shake it baby/do it baby"* theme, this time in the context of some fantasy Nazi sex that is more Jerry Sadowitz than Sado Masochist.

"Autobahn 66" initially sounds like a good idea, a pile-up of European and American rock mythologies in a speedy hymnal to transcontinental travel and cultural translocation. Trouble is, Primal Scream make no attempt to engage with the concept at all, and Andy Weatherall's brazen Neu!/Harmonia pastiche becomes yet another vehicle for Gillespie to mewl about how he's always *"dreamin'"*. "Detroit" works fine, grinding electronics fronted by Jim Reid of The Jesus And Mary Chain, who as a vocalist is more capable of a convincing rock delivery than Gillespie. "Skull X" (*"That's short for skull exploding,"* explains Gillespie, possibly in a comedy *Spinal Tap* accent) and "City", both mixed by Shields, are ordinary pub punk takes on David Bowie's "Suffragette City", with Shields seemingly unable to do anything about Primal Scream's chronic grasp of dynamics. The real clunker, though, is the Shields produced "Rise", which, you'll recall, was originally known as "Bomb The Pentagon". Over a thug-simple bassline and a backing that sounds like a weedy Atari Teenage Riot, Gillespie does his best to sound indignant about taxes, school, work, the military-industrial complex and *"genetically engineered ultra-violence"*.

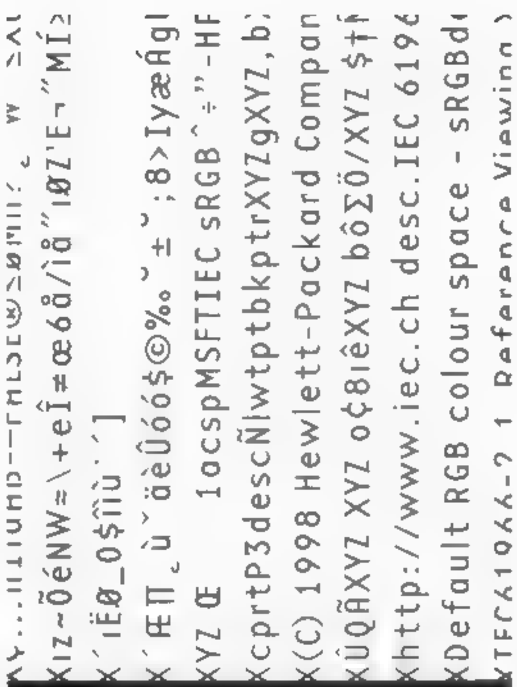
Yet for all their avowed antipathy towards the establishment, few rock groups outside the stadium circuit are as regressive and conservative as Primal Scream. They complain about consensus culture in a language that is such an integral part of it – from the cliched teenage sex fantasies of their rawk imagery through the meaningless buzzwords that pass for lyrics and a generic, hand me down idea of what rock 'n' roll should sound like in 2002 (exactly the same as ever, only with computers) – they can't help but be a part of the problem rather than the solution. Rock 'n' roll's most revolutionary figures have consistently been those who have taken its liberating impulse to heart and have gone on to establish their own highly individual voice. As it is, Primal Scream have plenty of individual voices in the mix – none of them their own.

RADIAN
REC.EXTERN
THRILL JOCKEY 113 CD

BY PHILIP CLARK

The cover of Vienna based trio Radian's second Thrill Jockey album features an oddly compelling photograph of a near deserted transport hangar taken from the air. It could be a portentous image left over from *Dr Strangelove*, or even a stealth photograph of an Iraqi airbase about to meet a violent end. Radian couldn't have found a more fitting cover image. *Rec.Extern* exists in a barren soundworld, where the clinical order of its musical forms is poised between extreme control and imploding chaos.

The malleable sonic putty for *Rec.Extern* is made up of mulched samples of 'real' atmospheres, audio snapshots capturing the acoustic properties of different spaces, such as a cranky elevator, a busy train station and more. A frayed thump trailers the first track "Nahfeld" which lays out the group's broad acoustic spectrum of harmony and noise. Martin Brandlmayr's Tony Oxley-like drum flourishes and



Above
Christophe Behrens | alicia.jpg - 16K SimpleText Rendering (Detail) Cromalin Proof, 640 x 480 mm
From '[illegible]

fällt™

Stephan Mathieu | [illegible]
AB-CD
The first release in the new Fällt Live Series, Stephan Mathieu's 'Gigue' was described in The Wire as "a remarkable example of Mathieu's live strategy."

The Fällt Live Series is an ongoing showcase for selected live performances. The second release in the series, by Chicago based Warmdesk, is out now, with future contributions by, among others, [illegible]mon.

www.fallt.com/live

Fehler vs. 12k/LINE | Vs.
Fuji Digital Proofs, Animated .gifs/LCD [illegible]
Fällt designers Fehler vs. 12k/LINE designers Taylor Deupree and Richard Chartier. Digital remixes of the Fällt, 12k and LINE artwork [illegible].
First shown at Mutek 2002.

www.fallt.com/vs

Aut | Home
CD
"Perhaps all music, [illegible] much something [illegible]ges from where it lay buried in the memory..."
Jean Genet

Exquisite melodies salvaged from discarded vinyl. Digital processing has rendered much of the original material unidentifiable, but the [illegible] recall is elusive and these fragments of [illegible]-loved music might seem familiar.

www.fallt.com/home

Christopher Willits | Pollen
CD
'Pollen' grew from software architectures that Willits designed and improvised with. A set of processes that fragment and fold smooth guitar lines on top of and into each other, generating patterns within patterns, and an unbounded stream of [illegible] but different forms.

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single vibraphone notes emerge from inside this field, the real time' rhythmic tension of which is vandalised by awkward splices and sudden silences. A sustained tone pitched piercingly high adds another dimension that, like the cover photo, suggests a richness of detail without yielding any concrete information.

"Jet" is propelled forward by the more traditional interaction of Brandlmayr's rolling snare drum and John Norman's buoyant underpinning bassline. Even so, the drummer's embellished marching rhythm is subject to nasal distortion that imbues the familiar with a sense of the alien. As elsewhere, repetitious vibraphone incongruously counterpoints electronic blasts, while Brandlmayr's jazz licks trace the blurred edges between guitar noise and sampled harmony. On this showing, Radian are true virtuosi and *Rec Extern* is a masterpiece of sculpted sound and daring psychological manipulations.

THE RESIDENTS
DEMONS DANCE ALONE
EAST SIDE DIGITAL ESD81672 CD

BY BRIAN MARLEY

It's been 30 years since The Residents formally introduced their music, if not themselves, to a record buying public. Quirky, funny and startlingly original, *Meet The Residents* had cultdom written all over it. Most groups launched in this manner usually have one good idea and they soon exhaust it. That's not the case with The Residents. Yet, since 1998's *Wormwood*, their releases have been limited to various compilations containing work in progress, limited edition MP3s, early oddities, songs shorn of vocals and snippets from live shows. From this meagre output, you might conclude that The Residents had little new to offer.

But their most recent compilation, *Petting Zoo*, contained two strong new songs in "Betty's Body" and "Wolverines", which now find their true home among the loosely woven garlands on *Demons Dance Alone*. Written for the most part since 11 September, it expresses various aspects of vulnerability in songs grouped under categories like 'Loss' and 'Denial'. The album's narrators reveal their fears, failings and unfulfilled desires in a tone of deadpan despair reminiscent of Harry Partch's hobo narratives. There's also a hint of de Gothicised Edward Gorey in the lists that make up "Life Would Be Wonderful": *"If I could afford a breakfast/Of bacon, toast and scrambled eggs/ If I hadn't been so reckless/ When I lost my other leg."*

The sentiments might be generally downbeat but the tunes are often upbeat and catchy. The Residents have never got this close to standard pop before, and the pleasure of it is, they do so without loss of character.

TERRY RILEY
ATLANTIS NATH
SRI MOONSHINE MUSIC SMM001 CD

BY TOM RECCHION

The Big Kahuna of drones, 'Om' is thought by some to be the ur sound of creation. Because sound is an ingredient in the life soup, the drone can be a very powerful experience, exalting one's consciousness while elevating the full essence of being into space.

Out there in the stratosphere sits Terry Riley. He has shapeshifted so often throughout his career that it's difficult to get a handle on him. *Atlantis Nath* is his most complex album since 1978's *Shri Camel*. Commissioned by Michel Redolfi, and produced in France at CIRM, *Atlantis Nath* is Riley's studio-recorded tribute to his revered Indian vocal teacher Pandit Pran Nath. Luc Martinez was responsible for the album's field recordings, mixing, mastering and sound design. The project took four years to complete.

It begins with "Crucifixion Voices". As foreboding as it is soothing, the track features Riley's voice in multitrack, summoning forth shamanic drones from deep in his throat. "Derveshum Carnivalis" clangs and ding dongs into *A Rainbow In Curved Air/ Church Of Anthrax* territory, with a MIDI interface generating its circulating patterns of synths. "Emerald Runner" showcases Riley the improvisor. His piano playing eschews stale technical virtuosity for a more humanistic technique. Flourishes and floating scales define his post classical nightclub jazz, blues, boogie woogie and ragtime tinged raga approach. Mixing in so many different references you can understand why the uninitiated might get lost in these intricate improvisations, though its edifice is gentle and smooth. Riffing on Duke Ellington's 'Caravan', he sings *"I took a ride on a rainbow"* in a voice engrained with the kindness and inherent sadness of his early cohort and friend Robert Wyatt. That impression is crystallised in a joyous passage of overdubbed scat singing.

The second half of the CD tells a different story. "Remember This", performed with The Nice Opera String Quartet, and the voice and synth pieces "Only A Day" and "Even Your Beloved Wife" are full blown ecstasy. The music travels deep in a harmonic haze, moving through spaces thick with incense, dense with eight years of karmic weight. Not a man to avoid the darker places, Riley maps them in passing and moves on. Then "The Crucifixion Of My Humble Self" stops you in your tracks, speechless amid the swirling loops of noise taken from his opera, *The Saint Adolf Ring*. The body annihilated and descended into madness.

This is the first release on Riley's own Sri Moonshine Music label. It's also one of his best, fulfilling Riley's ambition to realise "a seamless record of cinematic quality".

JEAN ROUTHIER
ENDURANCE
AURORE NOCTURNE PROMO CD

BY DAVE MANDL

With increasing frequency, sound artists are adopting the visual art practice of including explanatory texts with their work. Either you accept that such footnoting is unavoidable with complex pieces of modern audio art, or you dismiss the words as an unnecessary crutch. Whatever, it's refreshing to encounter a freestanding work that can be enjoyed without academic over explanation.

Strictly speaking, the 11 pieces on Jean Routhier's *Endurance* come with accompanying texts but they're too epigrammatic to be useful. At once cryptic, surreal and playful (in the manner of Satie) they simply add colour. My French is not up to working out if the lines are as nonsensical in the original French. Perhaps they resist translation. A dangerous mixture in the spirit of a swing without a washing line."

Calling himself a 'soundcrafter of urban audio

Size Matters

3", 7", 10" and other misshapes

Neil Campbell never fails to delivers the goods, and so it is on his new lathe *Bath Chorales* (Chocolate Monk CHOC114 7"). The single has two long drones of layered vocals, with light electronics being woven in from underneath. It reminds me of something that would have been good in the soundtrack of Schroeder's *La Vallee*. Whether or not the source material is, as the cover art seems to infer, recordings of sounds associated with throat diseases is something only Dylan Nyoukis knows for sure. And that hippy will never tell you *anything*. (BC)

But please, I need help with this new split by **Low** and Campbell's group **Vibracathedral Orchestra** (Misplaced Music MMO1 7"). Low's track, "David & Jude", is one of their beautiful, placid tosses into the lake of pop eternity, rippling slowly toward the edges of an indistinct shore while the sun sets in the distance. "Stole Some Sentimental Jewellery" by VO is one of their tumbling rolls of instrumental plunder, staggering into everything in the room, slowly accreting objects that get sucked into something like an organic drone whoosh. The single is a real listening pleasure and it would be good to be able to find it when necessary. (BC)

Confusion doesn't get much thicker than it does on *Moeru Mizu* (Family Vineyard FV7 7"), a new duo Improv record by **Philip Boyle** and **Yuko Kato**. Kato plays piano and blabs while Boyle, a Texas guitarist by trade, whizzes his way around "New Year's toys" slide whistles, harmonicas, guitars and throats. It's a bit hard to discern what the creative compact between them was, but the results are some of the most goddamn jovial free Improv noise that has come down the pike in a while. They sound like they're having a real bottle of fun and you will too. (BC)

It has been a while since a good anti-record passed through my door, so let me tell you I was ready (and then some) for *Musique Plastique* by **Ekul B** (Beta Lactam NO NUMBER 7"). I dunno what the disc is cut from, but it's thick, heavy, blue and is scarred with concentric grooves that just about beg you to destroy your turntable's stylus. Any time I look at a new anti-record, I can't help thinking about this party that Ron Lessard threw once, where (at least, according to Jimmy Johnson) he had rows of anti-records, covered with onion dip, playing on various portable record players, scattered throughout his apartment. Those were the days, my friend. (BC)

So Clear/Lights Out (Family Vineyard FV12 7") is a classic by any **MX-80** yardstick you care to handle. Rich Stim spins homely, surreal yarns, Bruce Anderson rakes the heavens with tight strung ham brutality. The group moves like a many-hinged dock monster. Listening to this takes me back to lost and happy days. Man, I wish these guys would tour. (BC)

Romulus And Remus gained fame as the original wolf-milk guzzlers, but they have returned as Dutch noise musicians and appear to be none the worse for their years in the bush. The tracks on *Hekate* (Beta Lactam MTE039 10") range from pleasant ramblings through small forests of bamboo percussion to electronic waves that are as cold as a blast of meat locker air. The Middle Eastern rug is not hung as high here as it was by Muslimgauze, but you can hear why people make the comparison. It's less clear what the 'knife and nudity' insert photo is supposed to represent, but that's why we have imaginations. Right? Right. Also worth noting here is that the covers consist of original handmade block prints and look quite nice. (BC)

Liima's *Version I-II* and *Version III-IV* (Kangaroo VYR043/044 2X10") are a pair of limited edition singles by Pan Sonic's Ilpo Vaisanen, released on his own label, a vinyl-only Raster-Noton offshoot. They look like dubplates and they're meant to these are Ilpo's responses to the language of dub, already a key component of the Pan Sonic lexicon. That doesn't mean echo-drenched glitch caverns Berlin-style, though. It's bare bones stuff: merciless drum programming, subtle FX and brutal analogue bass tones. A combination of bass ballast and flickering hi-hats carries the pieces forward with an irresistible austerity. Though the sounds and rhythms are nothing like a return to the JA source, these singles capture dub's combination of weight and instability better than most of its more literalist latterday chalice-bearers. (WM)

Teamforest uses a contemporary cracked electronica approach to pop ditherage here, but that is to be tolerated once in a while. Teamforest is, let us not forget, the solo project of a lonely German, one Philipp Bueckle who works alone so that he can do whatever the hell he wants. The fact that there is some sheen to the delicate, modern pop single, *Home/I Cannot Care As Much As I'd Like To* (Morr Music ANOST004 7") is not really off putting. Everybody tells me that **Wolf Eyes** are one of the best groups in the land. This assessment isn't incongruous with their new lathe cut, *Cut The Dog/Friday The 13th"* (American Tapes AM168 7"). Wolf Eyes, originally a sort of offshoot of Universal Indians, have now seemingly supplanted that group as the leaders of the Midwest Progressive Space Rock underground. Although it doesn't quite match the discordian sloth feast that one gets when viewing the group in all their vivid glory, it's still a fine way to spend a small part of each and every evening. (BC)

Reviewed by Byron Coley and Will Montgomery

folk ore", Routh er creates electroacoustic soundscapes that are v rtual y free of c iche – no d.gital whooshes or flying shards of meta here His orientat.on .s more horizonta than vertical That is, he often emphasises development over t me rather than obsessively stack ayers of texture Much of h s work fo lows coherent linear narratives, as opposed to pl ing together arbitrary agglomerations of sounds

At times, the album is ike trying to suss what's go ng on in a fi m with just the audio track running leav ng you to grasp the p ot from the son c cues Wel , without sleevenotes, one nterpretation is as good as another, and at base Routhier's compositions do what electroacoustic music does best They create smal parallel universes that are *almost* like ours, except they project sound juxtapositions that are slightly out of register w th the real world He mixes mechanical and electronic noises, snatches of conversat on and domestic sounds into often rivet ng sound pictures and even the most abstract of them are never less than engaging

KEITH ROWE & OREN AMBARCHI
FLYPAPER
STAUBGOLD 32 CD

BY JULIAN COWLEY

Ke th Rowe a leading exponent of aminar mprov sation blends his tab etop guitar and e ectronics with those of Sydney-based Oren Ambarch to run a sonic sirocco along the four part corridor of the t t e piece Motoric chugging ushers in the stream of rumbl.ng drones, extended booms, whistl.ng iso.ated warbles and a range of other sustained and layered sounds that const tute the music

The constancy of the droning doesn t inh b t the music's relentlessly horizonta movement as f across an unres sting desert landscape, w th continuous subtle modif cat on of texture and co our under the slowly chang ng light The vital ty of mprovisat on figures in the deta l Glare alternates w th reveal ng beam erratic presences are cast up by the forward mot on Rowe s ong and inf uential exper ence of improvising along these ines, within and beyond AMM clearly defines the path But Ambarch has prev ously worked with arch minimalist Ph l Nib ock whi e declaring a spec a interest n Alvin Lucier s ong string ventures He is thus equally pr med for a symbiotic encounter and the two men constant y enfo d one another's sounds w thin a rol ing cont nuum Rowe s signature transistor rad os are reg.stered n occasional te l tale staccato waves and d s.ocated vo.ces, otherw se who is playing what is not an issue and instrumental identity is mostly subordinated to the elemental f ux

SLEATER-KINNEY
ONE BEAT
KILL ROCK STARS KRS387 CD LP

BY FELIX CEMMELL

Starting out in 1994, Port and based S eater-Kinney are a ready on to their sixth studio album Their impress.ve back catalogue is charged with emotive energy fue led punk rock, regenerating and acce erating the mus c with the leaps of *All Hands On The Bad Ones* (1999) and *The Hot Rock* (2000) Reun ted w th producer John Goodmanson, who he med the r *Dig Me Out* (199 7), on *One Beat* the trio confident y attempt a more complex take on the world where Western polit.cal hypocrisy impacts on more immed ate contin.ing concerns, ike Riot Grrrl femin.sm and motherhood. On *One Beat*, a arge.y b uesy fee seals songs where S eater-K nney project an outward naivety both as a protective shield and as a mirror that mediates their persona reflections In Sleater-Kinney's form ation, naivety translates as simple, open, mmediate, funny and direct never s.mplistic

Musically, they intersperse crunching guitars and Carrie Brownstein's yielding vocals as you wou d expect from the group committed to a punk ethos Unpack them and other resonances reroute Sleater-K nney's journey to *One Beat* The r punk riffs rise out of The Beach Boys snarling surf guitar, the r vocal attack reca ls early Tina Turner In places they come over ike latterday Ronettes crossed with Shel ac informed by the wisdom Bi lie Holiday acquired throu gh pa nful experience

SPUNK
DEN ØVERSTE PÅ EN BLÅMALT FLAGGSTANG
RUNE GRAMMOFON R2026 CD

BY STEPHEN ROB NSON

In ts own twisted and idiosyncratic way, Spunk's *Den Øverste På En Blåmalt Flaggstang* shreds preconcept ons and s aps you about the head with them The name Spunk ra.ses expectations of a fract ous b ur of R ot Grrl fuzz, all raucous att tude and sweat drenched, ur-punk angularity But the snakecharm recorder oop and ra ndance "percuss ve bamboo tube" of "Kammelmus kk" make it immed.ately apparent that a who e other not is going on here The snakecharm ng tune and witchdoctor percussion coil and twist out of the speakers, lac ng themselves around a vocal de ivered in the rasp ng whisper of the demonica ly possessed

In fact the name Spunk turns out to be a meaningless nonsense word lifted from Pippi Longstocking the heroine of Astrid Lindgren's ch ldren's stories who is the object of Spunk s obsess on Apparent y, the four women mak ng up the group chose the r name in all innocence of ts predominant meaning in English. Moreover, as with their debut, *Det Eneste Jeg Vet, Er At Det Ikke Er En Støvsuger* (*Only Thing I Know, Is That It Isn't A Vacuum Cleaner*), th s second album takes its title from Pippi This one translates as *The Very Top Of A Bluepainted Flagpole* From th s lofty, f precarious, vantage point, Spunk draw their own skewed l nes around the notion of a 21st century chamber quartet

Their credentia s are impressive enough Voca ist/ vio in st/ therem n and e ectronics player Maja Ratkje studied composition with, among others Sofia Gub dul na and Lou s Andriessen She shares the electron cs duo Fe-mail with fellow Spunkette Hild Sofie Tafjord. Meanwhi e, trumpeter Kr stin Andersen brings both a compos tiona air and a jazz orchestra sens bility to the proceed ngs, and cellist Lene Grenager, who stud ed compos tion with Jud th Weir, further bolsters the quartet's compos t iona skills

Despite the r conservatory backgrounds, however, the album is anyth ng but an academ c exerc se In the main, its dozen tracks are improvised from a palate of dec dedly non rock 'n rol instruments, such as ce lo, trumpet, French horn bamboo flute pan p pes, bass tr angle and more The v vid production lights up every pit and recess of the CD format Meanwh le the group's live sampling and electronics are so prec se it's easy to forget that the mus c s spontaneous y improvised.

L ve sample loops barrack and curl around the overdriven bass (one of the a bum s few concessions to rock) that underscores the e.ectric Mi es Davis mode of "Strøm", while a therem n and muted trumpet insinuate themse ves sideways into a dense miasma

Elsewhere, it's the space that counts. The trumpet col ides with, and ca oles its way around, a series of vocal performances whose wit and absurdity accrue from track to track, from rasping whispers through disembodied careening to a gurgling, sp ttering elegy to Daffy Duck Their splatter voices align themselves w th the abrupt incisions of Tati-style fanfares, percussive c anks and a plethora of irreverent off-kilter intrusions on an album that runs the gaunt et between avant mindbarf and a m schievous desire to subvert expectat ons

Read the name Spunk in an English accent, even though you know it's wrong, and t captures the sense of an album that simp y oozes attitude, an attitude toward sound and space, to the possibilities of an improvising quartet as determ ned by their fine appetite for absurdity.

TAKU SUGIMOTO & ANNETTE KREBS
EINE GITARRE IST EINE GITARRE IST KEINE GITARRE IST EINE GITARRE
ROSSBIN RS005 CD

SSSD
HOME
GROB 431 CD

BY CL VE BELL

M nor explosions possibly accidental p ckup noise, guitar detritus. A muffled thump Silence Not a ot happen ng, you think, yet all the act vity is purposeful and odd y dramatic Then a gentle drilling starts up. Annette Krebs s impression of a distant woodpecker while Taku Sugimoto's bass guitar prowls the undergrowth Your ear is hooked, reeled back into the mystery. Or not The music seems indifferent either way

Keith Rowe s an important precedent for th s minimal guitar Improv, with his prepared guitar repertoire of hanche d fans and stuff dragged through str ngs But solo Rowe bu ds a mu ti layered texture, whereas this duo, like Samuel Beckett s characters, constant y threaten to peg out nto silence. Sugimoto plays notes: the guitar as guitar Krebs is more obl que: the guitar as sound source, even an obstacle in the way of music, to be clambered over But they are excellent partners, both singing from the same Zen Buddhist hymn sheet a beit one with no words and no paper

Of the three duets here, two are recorded n Tokyo's Off Site venue and one in Darmstadt Sugimoto plays six string bass on one A few passages offer acoust c luxury, particularly those involv ng feedback, but by and arge it's u tra-min mal music reduced, like a sauce s reduced But no way is this unproductive meandering, purpose and drama is always there Traditional y, mprov sors fire off notes at each other, generate physical excitement, and it's tallyho for the chase. Krebs and Sug.moto fire notes and then stop It's gone did you catch it?

Sugimoto takes a while to emerge from the

SSSD album on the Grob label, he's the one being laconic in the corner. The seven track titles spell out "Home Is Where My Hard Disc Was", implying that Werner Dafe decker, Martin Siewert and Burkhard Stangl made a special effort and did not pack their laptops when setting out for these sessions in Vienna. Only Siewert gets an extra credit for electronics, otherwise it's all guitars and basses. A room filling bass drone steers strings fingerpicking – at times it's like an experimental nod to the psychedelic folk of Pentangle. The close up electric guitar of track two, moving at snail's pace, conjures an uncanny echo of Low, my favourite quietest rock group. Things darken and toughen up on track three as Dafe decker's bowed double bass undertows a rich brew of growl and hum. Siewert lets Sugimoto call the shots for their duo guitar track "Disc". Sugimoto plays more or less tonally, but slows the pace as only he knows how, letting the silence do the talking. This is a strange but beautiful album, its minimalist improv approach employed to build a luxurious, ringing guitar world. More a case of bathing in rich chocolate sound than getting upset in dark Viennese angst.

THE SUNTANAMA
THE SUNTANAMA
DRAG CITY DC220 CD

BY DAVID KEENAN

The Suntanama represent yet another mutant branch of New York's ever fertile No Neck Blues Band, but, unlike fellow travellers K Salvatore, IZITITIZ and Enos Slaughter, their methodology is much more straightforward compositionally speaking. Working from classic American song forms, The Suntanama leave little space for the kind of wiggy improvisations that the NNCK routinely turn out. Their music is a winning hybrid of Canned Heat's blues chug and Creedence Clearwater Revival's Bayou rhythms. Yet for all its signposts along the way, *The Suntanama* never settles into a genre exercise. The participants' collective background give the songs real elasticity, as the group work with fluctuating time signatures and an appetite for jamming within tight rock structures. In places their music achieves the effortless fluidity of Captain Beefheart's Magic Band.

Vocalist Darren Zotowski dominates the sound, with his backwoods whoop that's as tough as The Grateful Dead's long departed blues singer Pigpen. Elsewhere, he could be channeling the spectre of "Stray Cat Blues" era Mick Jagger. Lyrically the tracks read like a garbled travelogue, with surreal character sketches and pastoral epiphanies. And for once, Neil Hagerty, late of Royal Trux, turns in a production job that sounds as good as his old group's records. This time he resists buffing it to the absurd cartoon sheen that he usually bestows on outside productions. The ragged, uptempo blues of "Sunset Samagain" is the disc's undoubted highlight. Sounding precariously live, John Allen's lead guitar taps the same minimal electricity grid as Can's Michael Karoli.

The album's two gorgeous closers, "The Hoof (The Hoof)" and "The Bringing Rain", both open with deceptively loose flurries of guitar that bring to mind The Grateful Dead's teasing way of entering the head of "St Stephen". "Whippoorwill" heads deeper into the post-Haight fallout, with Zotowski's vocals coming over like Skip Spence on his comedown album, *Oar*, until the group pick up on the quicksilver trails left behind by The Byrds circa "Artificial Energy". Rock improvisors revitalising the blues with blood 'n' guts shots of itself reconnects the music with the source.

SYBARITE
NONUMENT
4AD 2207 CD

BY TOM ROE

Although the masses may not be quite ready for his understated, soft sound, Xan Hawkins is ready for them. After touring with the reunited Silver Apples in the mid 90s, composing a film soundtrack and releasing a slew of singles over the past two years, he went on to make a name for himself as Sybarite. As defined by his work, Sybarite is a pleasure seeking minimalist whose complex melodies are integrated with all sorts of soft sounds. A sophisticated song like "Without Nothing, I'm You" sounds as luxurious as his present alias, what with its pulsing, yet restrained beats melding seamlessly with acoustic guitars, strings and various cuddly beats and bips.

When the beats go downtempo and get dubby an elegiac quality pervades the music. Maybe that's just a by-product of any art made over the last year in New York City. Indeed, the disc's most haunting track, "Fresh Kills", is also the name of the Staten Island landfill that was reopened to swallow the rubble of the World Trade Centre. But the album's sadness also springs from a more personal source, going by Hawkins dedicating *Nonument* to his recently deceased father.

On this album, Hawkins opens up to the masses by adding vocals for the first time. Well, he floats voices on the music like an inflatable device on a calm sea, but it's a start. Gregory Kenney (formerly of Boston scrap metal rock group Neptune) and Brooke Williams whisper their words into Hawkins's cinematic sweep. Cellist Leah Coloff, trumpeter Matt Hilgenberg (from the latest incarnation of The Duke Ellington Orchestra) and a few sampled whales variously weight the sadness on several tracks.

Art and architectural references also dominate *Nonument*. Hawkins borrows his album title from 'building cutter' Gordon Matta-Clark, and names a song vamp enlivened with live drums and bass after German surrealist Unica Zürn. Closing *Nonument* with the sappy New Age elegy "Three Sided" certainly isn't out of keeping with the album's downbeat tone, but its sudden lapse of taste is distracting.

BELINDA SYKES & JOGLARESA
BALLADS OF LOVE AND BETRAYAL
VILLAGE LIFE 01013VL CD

BY CLIVE BELL

Belinda Sykes may be professor of medieval song at Trinity College of Music, but her group Joglaresa are clearly on a mission to kick medieval music out of the academic cloister and into the marketplace. Far from the page, anonymous and over-careful practices too often associated with this music, these are performances full of personality, infused with understanding of Balkan and Arabic music. These musicians are comfortable with improvisation, not averse to a spot of healthy showing off, and the arrangements respect the vital role of the drummer in anything medieval. Percussionist Paul Clarvis and violin/oud player Stuart Hall have a longstanding partnership within Orquestra Mahatma, Tim Garside has played percussion for Natacha Atlas and Transglobal Underground, and Kim Burton was accordionist in 3 Mustaphas 3.

The repertoire is the Sephardic Jewish song heritage of the Mediterranean: erotic Moroccan ballads, tales of bloodthirsty Bulgarians and Spanish love songs in Arabic. Sykes is particularly good at the beautiful melodies of the latter. On "Ya Hamaami" she unleashes a full-blooded ululation which triggers a colourful onslaught of bagpipes from Burton. Sykes's voice has great emotional range, luxuriating in Arabic eroticism one moment, and the next hollering the open throated Bulgarian style and tumbling into a vocal jacuzzi of yodelling. It's a voice that deserves better than this rather plain production, in which a slightly clumsy mix sometimes separates Hall's playing from the group. And there are a couple of jarring moments when Hall's violin imports an alien flavour of jazz cabaret. He compensates for this with playing of exquisite pianissimo delicacy, for example on "Paxarico" from Sarajevo. These quibbles aside, Sykes has put together an album of great character and beauty.

TARWATER
DWELLERS ON THE THRESHOLD
KITTY-YO KY02065 CD

BY MIA L CLARKE

The title *Dwellers On The Threshold* is Berlin group Tarwater's oblique reference to the line of demarcation dividing songwriters from electronica's track makers. Tarwater exactly embody that divide, walking a line between analogue and digital, traditional and modern, rock and remix, evenhandedly fulfilling their requirements with raids on both sides.

This is Tarwater's fourth release on German label Kitty-Yo. It's the most challenging thing they've put out so far, the flipside to some of their earlier vaguely buzzing summer musics. Tarwater's darkly hypnotic sound here turns curiously cold, as it straddles yet another divide, between electronica dissonance and concrete-stiff Industrialism. The music's former outlines might make it less abstract than 1998's *Stur*, but on *Dwellers On The Threshold* an austere economy determines the make-up of its short, pinched pieces, which for the most part consist of heavily treated pragmatic beats and spoken word samples.

An occasional collaborator, Norwegian performance artist Tone Avenstroup, has mysteriously described their music as "the border of Europe". But *Dwellers* isn't so easily located. They've forsaken the ill-defined 'European sound' that earned Tarwater and sister group To Rococo Rot their children of Kraftwerk and post rock scuffle reputation. In its place is a broader geographical melange that is not without charm. A track like "Phin" works African drums into a sensual rhythmic flow, while "Be Late" is as voluptuous as a lush Javanese gamelan.

The difference between Tarwater now and then is most vividly underlined in a redeeming humour that lurks beneath their ascetic self image. Three second samples presumably snatched from a political rally pepper "Miracle Of Love" with notions running counter to its title. Meanwhile, the 1950s sci fi B-movie crawl of "Tesla" blunts Tarwater's disdainful edge. Pushing the concept of a displaced group is one thing: implying they have been abducted by aliens is something else altogether.

VARIOUS
EAST ASIA TRAVELOGUE
TRAVELOGUE TRAV002 CD

ARMCHAIR TRAVELLER
ARMCHAIR TRAVELLER
REVIEW RECORDS RERE175 CD

BY CLIVE BELL

Party with a conscience. Isn't that what we all want to do? Certainly *East Asia Travelogue* feels that way: the sleeve provides a table of life expectancy in Far Eastern countries, while dangling a vision of mystical temples and full moon beach parties like a holiday brochure. This compilation feels like a slightly downmarket response to the *Rough Guide* series – compiler Paul Fisher did the *Rough Guide To Japanese Music* CD – and it gets off to a dodgy start. First we learn that in Indonesia they're crassly blending gamelans from Bali and Sunda over a jolly drumbeat influenced by Western dance music. Then Noranza Idris demonstrates how Malaysian MOR pop sounds like Middle Eastern MOR pop. And Isan Slete shows the Globestyle label happy to license a clodhopping remix of a perfectly harmless Thai folk song, to generate a little extra mileage from a 13 year old ethnic album.

After that things pick up, and the best music on the CD, a nimble Burmese xylophone, sadly comes from a country which we probably shouldn't be visiting. The Pur group from Korea place dark traditional drums beneath a moody shawm. Paris based Vietnamese singer Huong Thanh gets sultry with muted trumpet and traditional lute, and the cunning Labor Exchange Band reveal how a Taiwanese popsong needn't be cheesy. Elderly singers from Vietnam and Japan's aboriginal Ainu perform strongly over bottleneck guitar and zither respectively. The delightful 1964 Hong Kong teahouse song was used in last year's Wong Kar Wai film *In The Mood For Love*. The compilation is highly accessible, and two thirds of it is fine music.

Armchair Traveller have decided to package their record as the ultimate beyond World Music CD, which may strike you as brilliant marketing or an unnecessary gag. I think the latter – this is music that can stand perfectly well on its own eight feet. The Travellers are a Berlin quartet, two women and two men, who have clearly listened to a lot of non Western music, studied closely a lot of non-Western instruments, and then forged their own highly distinctive sound from homemade or adapted instruments: air-sax, buzz tar, prepared viola caipira or glassharp. My favourite is Sebastian Hilken's metal object.

Anyway, this music carries echoes of Vietnamese folk, Amazonian rituals and more, but ultimately sounds like nothing else. Plucked or hammered string instruments riff in the foreground, while group members take turns to roar like mammoths in the distance. Hella Von Ploetz's bowed metal sheet or Werner Durand's PVC clarinets. Much is densely rhythmic and all is collaborative ensemble rather than individual displays. When they improvise freely they recall vintage LMC music by, say, David Toop, Max Eastley and Peter Cusack. Elsewhere the pulsing "Hindustry" has the junkyard sophistication and manic determination of a Tom Waits track. Mastered by Stefan Betke, aka Pole, this is powerful, polychrome music.

The Boomerang

New reissues: rated on the rebound

Cryptic creator: Anthony Braxton

Part of a deluge of historical avant jazz reissues from BYG/Actuel (courtesy of the Italian Abraxas/Get Back label) is a 1969 release from **Anthony Braxton** whose title is usually rendered as *B-Xo/N-O-1-47A* (Actuel 6 LP) – the actual title is one of Braxton's cryptic diagrams. Recorded during Braxton's brief stay in Paris, it features what was to become The Creative Construction Company: trumpeter Leo Smith, violinist Leroy Jenkins and percussionist Steve McCall, three brilliant and sensitive improvisors. Although the recording was only Braxton's third as a leader, his ambition of pushing jazz well beyond its previous borders was a ready abundantly clear. In addition to employing outré graphic scores, Braxton incorporated elements of modern classical composition from the likes of Schoenberg and Cage, and worked with *sound* as opposed to just notes. His frustration with the lukewarm reception (bordering on outright hostility) that he received led him to give up music for a short time after this recording to hustle chess in New York. That the music here sounds far less radical today than it did in 69 merely demonstrates what a huge impact Braxton's ideas eventually had, first among his colleagues in Chicago's Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians and then beyond. (DM)

In 1964 while searching the South for old records and old bluesmen, the young John Fahey turned up Bukka White. The following year, after many dirt roads had traveled off, he finally found **Nehemiah 'Skip' James**. James was "a bootlegger, a pimp, a gambler, a robber and a killer", but the biggest sin of all – he was also a creep. Unlike all those nice folk blues musicians who were already on the college folk blues circuit (the saintly Mississippi John Hurt or the jovial Bukka White), James had the uncanny knack of being instantly disliked. However, back in February 1931 he had traveled to recording studios in Grafton, Wisconsin, and produced 18 tunes that have been reissued as *I'm So Glad – The Complete 1931 Paramount Recordings* (Document DOCD5005 CD). These songs are uneasy listening – violent, mysogynistic, depressing, depressed and at times psychotic – but together they constitute work of unremitting and raw genius, lyrical, emotional, displaying dazzling musicianship and atmospheric at times to the point of hypnosis. Unlike Robert Johnson, Skip James has had relatively few imitators and this remastered collection reminds us what folly it is to attempt to remould such immutable art. (SB)

Available in an extremely limited edition packaged as an old Meccano-style box, complete with regulation gender-specific young boy staring pensively at his latest steel erection, comes *The ∞ Universe* (Mutant Jazs MJ1001 CD), the complete recorded history of Dutch New Wavers **Mecano**. Led by painter Dirk Polac, who drew considerable inspiration from Meccano's antiquated futurist chic, this elegantly studied five-piece operated sporadically from late 1978 through 1982, sounding not unlike Tubeway Army and Soft Cell busking with The Band Of Holy Joy. How well you respond to this may depend on your reaction to the New Romantic brutalism of songs with titles like "Save Machmen From Instinct", "Necropsy Proves The Pagan" and "The March Of The Iron Workers". Another good reason why the 1980s just won't go away. (KH)

Judging by the ritualised industrial rumbling of "Obsidian", an awesome 15 minute slow burn of a track from 1992 that opens *The Key* (Terminal Antwerp TA001 2XCD), a two CD retrospective collection of **Psychick Warriors Ov Gaia** tracks and previously unreleased remixes, something's definitely missing from today's electronic dance music. There's a sense of purpose and commitment, captured in The Golden Palominos' mix of "Psoudoun" and the remorseless impassive assault of "Dust", represented here by two aggressively stripped versions, that remains deeply infectious. Recorded at a time when Trance was more than just a term of abuse, these dark musical entries are uniquely placed as points of contact between heavy Industrial beats, the inner directed spiritual disciplines of the Temple of Psychick Youth, an affiliated organisation whose influence has yet to be acknowledged properly, and the ecstatic possibilities of Techno. Scare yourself with how good they sound. (KH)

Les Primitifs Du Futur was the group that cemented around comic strip genius/record collector/mandolin player Robert Crumb when he fled the US for Paris in the 1980s. The music collected on *Cocktails D'Amour Suivi De Bluestory & The New Blue 4* (Paris Jazz Corner PJC222009 CD) is in a similar, quaintly archaic style to the mock old-timey string band blues Crumb recorded with The Cheap Suit Serenaders, with some bal musette thrown in for local specificity. The problem with Les Primitifs Du Futur, though, is that, unlike The Serenaders, they perform all original material. When The Serenaders strayed from the path of Big Bill Broonzy and Sonny Boy, they had the common sense to inject their pastiches with a sense of humour. *"Nobody likes our music, they all want stuff that's loud/Don't get along with the folkies, we don't fit with the disco crowd"*. There's not much of that here, especially if you don't speak French, and it all veers dangerously close to Leon Redbone territory. Another note of warning: only the first six tracks are Les Primitifs Du Futur, the remaining 12 are by Bluestory & The New Blue 4, a group that featured guitarists Didier Roussin and Dominique Cravic before they joined up with Crumb. (PS)

King Crimson's first live album *Earthbound* (VIRGIN CA5632 CD), seemed shockingly raw when it appeared in 1972. The cover was matt black with silver lettering and the cultivated refinement of earlier albums seemed to have been cast out along with their vivid graphics. There was talk of guitarist Robert Fripp fulfilling contractual obligations with this release of barely processed tapes. With hindsight, its grunginess (no less evident on CD) is highly appealing; shedding winsomeness the group disclosed grit and sinewy power. The juggernaut "21st Century Schizoid Man" lurches into view with real menace, propelled by drummer Ian Wallace, Mel Collins on saxophones and Boz Burrell's roaring vocals and pounding bass. That trio soon left Crimson and teamed up with bluesman Alexis Korner. Here Fripp unleashes some splendidly venomous soloing over their earthy swagger. He also plays with delicate beauty on "The Sailor's Tale". The highlight is "Groon", originally the B-side of the "Cat Food" single, extended live to 15 ill-tempered minutes of off-kilter improvised rock. A second live album, *USA* (VIRGIN CA9867 CD), appeared in 1975, following a successful period of studio activity registered in the opener, "Lark's Tongues In Aspic, Part 2". The reconstituted group had Bill Bruford drumming, David Cross on violin and John Wetton (later described memorably by Chris Bohn as "the Charlton Heston of British Rock") supplying bass and voice. Eddie Jobson was drafted in for some post-facto violin/keyboard additions. Again reviewers received the album grudgingly. *USA* still has an air of being in many respects superfluous and is in places ponderous, but it does hang together and does contain the scorching improvisation "Asbury Park", concentrated group playing that whets the appetite for more in similar vein. The CD additionally offers workmanlike versions of "Fracture" and "Starless" plus a long wake of applause.

By 1995 and the studio album *Thrak* (VIRGIN CA4567 CD) Crimson had hardened into a tight, punchy double trio. Fripp and singer Adrian Belew on guitars, Bruford and Pat Mastelotto drumming, Tony Levin on bass, Trey Gunn on stick. Belew takes on the role of sensitive balladeer, and Beatlish inclinations are worked through on the spirited "Dinosaur" and the wistful "Walking On Air", but the prime moments come when Fripp's taste for angularity is unalloyed, as on the aptly named, satisfyingly nasty title track. *McDonald & Giles* (VIRGIN Promo CD) was a 1970 Crimson offshoot. Talented multi-instrumentalist Ian McDonald and fine drummer Michael Giles departed to pursue their own path with support from Traffic's Steve Winwood among others. In the company of the forward-looking rock pinnacles of that time, this album has a half-realised, end of the 60s feel. There are many attractive moments, compromised by tentativeness. The stand-out track, Giles's "Tomorrow's People – The Children Of Today" with its sonorous brass, saxophone, flute and quirky percussion, remains persuasive, a vibrant canvas amongst sketches. (JC)

Weather Report are the pre-eminent jazz-fusion supergroup, alongside Mahavishnu Orchestra and Return To Forever. Led by Miles Davis alumni Joe Zawinul and Wayne Shorter, they combined original collective improvisation with audience accessibility, achieving unprecedented popularity with their hit "Birdland". Weather Report developed Davis's studio ethos into areas of sound-painting beyond the parameters of jazz. These reissues of the fourth, fifth and sixth studio albums respectively, are from 1974-76 – a period of transition prior to the ascendancy of bass maestro Jaco Pastorius, who appears on just a couple of tracks from the end of the *Black Market* (Sony COL5076582 CD) session in 1976. The downside is that since this was increasingly Joe Zawinul's group, it's at the mercy of his lapses of taste, and he overeggs the increasingly complex electronic effects. The result is a number of flawed gems amid a fair amount of dross. *Mysterious Traveller* (Sony COL5076572 CD) is the earliest of the albums. Funkmeister Alphonso Johnson replaces founder member and acoustic bassist Miroslav Vitous on all except one track, marking an approach that moved the group further from mainstream jazz. "American Tango" is characteristic, with garish, strident synthesizer weaving through Shorter's lyrical soprano and tenor work. *Black Market* is commonly regarded as the best from this period, but for my money it's inferior to its precursor *Tale Spinnin'* (Sony COL5076562 CD), their most lyrical album, which features Zawinul's spare, ethereal "Badia" and gorgeous "Man In The Green Shirt" – though Shorter on soprano needs longer to stretch out. *Black Market* kicks off with Zawinul's joyful, lyrical title track, and also features the latter's tribute to departed alto saxophonist Julian 'Cannonball' Adderley. Shorter contributes two numbers, the plangent "Elegant People" and "Three Clowns", which are spoiled by some risible synth tones from Zawinul. In fact there's too much Hungarian synthesizer goulash all around, and the garish tone on Alphonso Johnson's "Herandnu" sets the scene for much vapid fusion that followed. These mid-price reissues reflect the length of the original LPs, with no extra tracks. *The Best Of Weather Report* (Sony COL5076592 CD) is a compilation of tracks recorded from 1973 to 1980, including "Birdland" and "A Remark You Made" by Zawinul, and Wayne Shorter's "Mysterious Traveller" and "Elegant People". These have been remixed respectfully, making an excellent introduction to a massively influential group who sometimes achieved greatness. (AH) *Reviewed by Steve Barker, Julian Cowley, Andy Hamilton, Ken Hollings, Dave Mandl and Peter Shapiro*

Avant Rock

Reviewed by David Keenan

COMETS ON FIRE
FIELD RECORDINGS FROM THE SUN
BA DA BING B NG034 CD

Field Recordings From The Sun is the second album from this American West Coast psychedelic group who work the Tao of precursors like Mad River and Quicksilver Messenger Service into aggress ve metal ic hymns to volume and power on a par w th Black Sabbath circa *Sabotage* Vocal st Ethan Miller sings through the same heavily phased hole in the sky that Ozzy Osbourne once sheltered n, and the leve s of crunchy distortion match those of Nanjo Asahito's High Rise Gu.tar st Ben Chasny, of Six Organs Of Admittance gests throughout the disc, and while t's a blast to hear him wrest ing form from horizon-spanning feedback, the CD's highlight "The Unicorn" could just as easily pass for a Six Organs track. Here, Chasny's remarkab e improvised acoustic picks out tunnels of sound, only for M ller to f ood it w th heavi y processed guitar.

ENOS SLAUGHTER
ON SUNDAY
CONDUIT CREATIONS/SOUND@ONE
CC#003 S a1#61 LP

Enos 'Country' Slaughter was a baseball player who took the St Louis Cardinals to victory against the Boston Red Sox in the 1946 World Ser es with a legendary 'mad dash' that saw him score from first base on a single – a feat that has yet to be surpassed. These days, S aughter is merely a front for yet another No-Neck Blues Band/Sunburned Hand Of The Man offshoot working out of Har em s H nthouse Yet both of these Enos Slaughter man festations are expressions of something ntrinsica ly Amer can. Using acoustic instruments l ke ban o and mandolin alongside unplugged and electric guitars, bass and percuss on, Enos Slaughter as group rematerialise the kind of elemental shapes first carved out by Dock Boggs and his like, on y according to a reso utely post Derek Bai.ey logic. Unl ke many other NNCK-related workouts, they dispense with a frenzied 'everyone p ay ng at once' feel for more open spaces that al ow the group to ndu ge in some startling shadowplay every bit as damaged as early Royal Trux.

THE IDITAROD
THE GHOST, THE ELF, THE CAT AND THE ANGEL
BLUE SANCT NRI065 CD

From Rhode Is and, The Id tarod play a m nimal k nd of bleak psychedelic folk that owes as much to the somnambulism of Bristol's Movietone as t does to early 70s private press semi legends ike Stone Angel and Caedmon. The time-frozen feel of their slow processionals are further heightened by the subtle use of chimes, tamboura, singing bowl, vio a and banjo, which cast ittle shadows beneath Jeffrey Alexander s acoustic gu tar picking Vocalist Carin Wagner sings in a half monotone as if lost in reverie She's joined for two tracks by the German folk duo Fit & Limo who play bouzouki, du cimer, organ and glockenspiel as well as providing vocals The Iditarod's read ng of "Let No Man Stea Your Thyme" closely monitors Pentang e's recorded version, while the.r take on a droning lament "Unfortunate Lass" the set's highlight – echoes Steeleye Span's masterful "When I Was On Horseback".

LIARS
THEY THREW US ALL IN A TRENCH AND STUCK A MONUMENT ON TOP
BLAST FIRST BFFP172 CD

Liars, a guitar based four piece bolstered by tinny drum machine and primit ve dub effects, are currently being touted as New York's great punk rock hope After a l they're Blast First's first s gning in aeons and they secured the support s ot on Son c Youth s recent tour But whereas punk's orig na impulse was towards a mus ca ground zero, Liars' music feels a lot more nostalgic and referential Pogo ng self-consciously forward on angular bassl nes, their tough, dec amatory vocals recal British agit punk groups like The Gang Of Four or even The Desperate Bicycles Their songs dea in the surreal sm of the everyday, with garbled lyrics about white paint, cement mixers and *"the pulse of Amenca"* without any of the withering bathos of masters of the ikes of former Pavement voca ist Steve Malkmus or Dave Berman of The Si ver Jews They're at their best on tracks like "Nothing Is Ever Lost Or Can Be Lost My Science Friend", where they conjure the wheeling c austrophobia of P L circa *Metal Box* And they take full points for padding by upgrading 25 m nutes of music to a full 50 m nute a bum via the most audacious use of tape manipulation th s side of *Neu! 2*.

MAJOR STARS
DISTANT EFFECTS
SQUEALER SQLR036 CD

The husband and wife tagteam Wayne and Kate Rogers of Major Stars emerged from the wreckage of Magic Hour whose l ne up was completed by acid fo k duo Damon & Naomi on drum n' bass The Major Stars b.ueprint differs little from that of Mag c Hour, however Tracks bu d from fo k inflected, tranced vocals that give way to hugely melod c psychedelic guitar mprovisat.ons courtesy Wayne Rogers. Bassist Tom Leonard and drummer Dave Lynch lack the iquid grace of Damon & Naom , they work just as hard at keeping Wayne airborne, their unobtrusive rhythm c log c marking off a he l of a lot of space. Lyrically they're as perfunctory as ever, stil rhyming *"moon"* with *"soon"*, but in Major Stars pieces, vocals are essentially bridgeheads to euphoric nstrumental passages This blueprint is best realised on the closing "E ephant", where Wayne's guitar cuts s nging figures from melancholy chords and the dying drone of feedback.

MECCA NORMAL
THE FAMILY SWAN
KILL ROCK STARS KRS385 CD

Mecca Normal's unstinting al egiance to punk rock aesthetics and anarcho-feminist pol tics can often leave you feeling thoroughly harangued after an a bum's worth of scratchy guitar and strident vocals But *The Family Swan* is a much more personal work Jean Smith's lyr cs engage with the trauma of familial relationships, while the album s expanded mus cal pa.ette allows guitarist David Lester more atmospheric space The title track's funny/sad memorial to dysfunctional parenthood and ch ldhood guilt, supported by some gentle electric guitar, is the album's highlight A simple, plucked guitar gives a feathery folk feel to the surreal nostalg a of "No Mind's Eye" by contrast, the closing "Convince Yourself" floats Sm th's malevolent voca s on a slow damburst of droning organ and bleak, bluesy guitar Nevertheless the album leaves the impression that Mecca Norma. are not yet ready to break free of their prim t ve song based temp ate, repeatedly pass ng on opportunities for expansion. At the end of "Is This You?", for instance, Lester suddenly gets this whirling, de ayed guitar pattern a rborne only to stub it out It'd be nice to hear them up anchor and wade al the way out

MUDHONEY
SINCE WE'VE BECOME TRANSLUCENT
SUB POP SP555 CD

Of al of the groups to come out of the late 80s/early 90s rock explos on that took place in Washington State, Mudhoney (alongside Beat Happening) were always the most punk. Yet, paradoxically, a sense of history marked them out from most of their fellow travel ers Mudhoney reconnected to the source of the Northwest's rock 'n' roll supremacy, mainlining the primal energy first unleashed by 1960s teen combos like The Sonics and The Wailers Much has changed in the four years since their last album, *Tomorrow Hit Today*. Orig nal bassist Matt Luk n left n 99 to be replaced by Guy Maddison previously of Lubricated Goat, but what's immediately apparent from the opening track "Baby, Can You Dig The L ght" is just how much more expansive their sound has become. With saxophonist Craig Flory wailing brass all over Mark Arm's b.ues, Mudhoney presently recal Iggy Pop circa *Kill City*. But on "Take It Like A Man", they suggest how *Back In The USA* might have turned out, if The MC5 were st ll cutting sou testimonials Lo and behold The MC5's guitarist Wayne Kramer turns up on bass for the d rect garage rock of "Ins de Job"

THE PILOT SHIPS
THERE SHOULD BE AN ENTRY HERE
BLUE SANCT INRI052 CD

Helmed by various members of Chicago based space rockers Stars Of The Lid and fellow Texan trave lers Monroe Mustang, The Pilot Ships navigate the same slow f owing streams f rst charted by groups ike Labradford and Low. Their debut album, *There Should Be An Entry Here*, sank without a trace on its first release in 1997, but that hasn't deterred B ue Sanct from making it available again now The arrangements are uniformly gorgeous, with echoed guitar creating great peacock plumes of colour, while the r p ano suggests the meditative headspace of Popol Vuh Yet noth ng here really adds up to a finished song. Half hearted and gratingly tuneless male and female vocals certainly don't bring their sketches or half realised ideas to c osure They're further hampered by an inflexible drummer who grounds certain passages in grey post rock terrain However there are p enty of moments where the group approach escape velocity. One such h.ghl ght is the droning "A Stop Stil Remains", which throbs like a bruise

REV 99
EVERYTHING CHANGED AFTER 7-11
PAX RECORDINGS PR90255 CD

A collective of free musicians and would-be multimedia artists based around saxophonist and vocalist 99 Hooker, Rev 99 walk the wire between abstract improvisation, Residents style cultural subterfuge and the k nd of pointed collage favoured by V cky Bennett's People Like Us The CD features a variety of conceptual approaches, but it's most successful when the focus is ent rely on the jam, if that s not a contradict on. "Where's The 3 Martini War?" features avant guitarists Ernesto D az Infante and Borbetomagus's Donald Miller both of whom fire off searching blasts of feedback, while Hooker reels off a ist of famous dr nkers. Other tracks aspire to the concrète bombast of the likes of To Live And Shave In LA. Environmental collages of TV jingles and the mumbling monologues of street peop e are interrupted by the exhaust fumes of Hooker's gnarly sax. But, lack ng TLASLA eader Tom Smith's ntensity of vision, at best Rev 99 sound ike a compilation tape made up by a frazzled drug buddy. The disc reaches its true nadir with the 3:44 of comp ete silence called "Britney Spears Autopsy". With this kind of incis ve cultural critique, who needs kid brothers?

TRANSMISSIONARY SIX
TRANSMISSIONARY SIX
FILM GUERRERO NO NUMBER CD

Transmiss onary Six are the duo of Terri Moeller from The Walkabouts and Paul Austin from Willard Grant Conspiracy. Their self-titled debut credits "the great state of Arizona" on its sleeve and the music within has that kind of slow desert hiss that is often interpreted as an attempt to give sonic form to huge and spaces. The predominantly acoustic songs are slow moving for the most part, shift ng in and out of phase on the slightest breath, while the p odding use of piano and organ gives the album the momentum of a trek through quicksand This territory has been well trodden already by trave lers like Thin White Rope and Giant Sand However, Transmissionary S x heighten their particular sense of tota isolation with snatches of song heard through static and the distant buzz of telegraph poles, atmospherically suggesting the far off workings of the machinery of night.

Critical Beats

Reviewed by Philip Sherburne

ALGORITHM
WAR AT 120/80
COUNTERFLOW CF017 12"

Like Algorithm's earlier singles for Florida labels Counterflow and Beta Bodega, the three tracks here pair enjambment thick invectives with a molasses soup of string heavy production. Algorithm's misanthropic slant makes a curmudgeon like El P look positively carefree, thanks to lines like *"I find myself drowning in shallow 'cup is half empty' symbolism/Yoko Ono stank puss growth stunted by simple ism"*. Under the strain of such overloaded language their politics fall apart, even leading (unintentionally?) to what looks disturbingly like an anti abortion screed on "Escalator": *"Some offspring meet the doctor's sabre and never the cradle/Homicide committed in pre natal."* Plex and Seth P Brundel's claustrophobic production – melting together mandolins, accordions, sitars, strings and copious wailing – is a perfect match for these tales of manic depressive shrinks and alcoholic go nowheres: *"My landlady provided me with a patch of leathery flesh to keep my mouth muffled/I must repent I scuffle/With a couple/Of heavy belt buckles/Whipping 'em across my back creating welts and sore muscles."* Jeez, even Rollins lightened up once in a while.

DANDY JACK & THE LATIN LUVA
EINE FILE FÜR DERRICK
PERLON PERL27 12"

Dandy Jack, aka Martin Schopf of Ricky Martin, offers up two more exercises in hip displacement on his latest fusion of South American syncopation and Germanic MicroHouse. The title track sends a sandpaper disc gliding down a graphite shuffleboard court into a frictionless universe where shakers and doorbuzzers and steam valves make beautiful music together: the kind of readymade robot ensemble Tom Zé could only have dreamed of. "Delay Lama", titled with the Perlon label's usual gusto for puns, sounds like the most relentless fit of hiccups ever experienced, racked with pops and gasps.

GINA X VS METRO AREA
MORE GDM VOL 3
TIGERSUSH TSR003 12"

The third instalment of the Paris label's "More God-Damn Music" series continues to pair vintage tracks with their latterday derivatives. This time Germany's Gina X Performance – the late 70s/early 80s new wave combo fronted by Gina Kikoine, resuscitated in 2000 on Andrew Weatherall's *Nine O'Clock Drop* compilation – contributes "No GDM", a half-speed electro-disco track glistening with G-Funk keys and a glossy, coked-up production sheen. Gina X's snarl, somewhere between Marlene Dietrich and Nina Hagen, comes off like an admonishment to Williamsburg hipsters, a reminder that cold-hearted asexuality trumps kitsch every time. Metro Area (Morgan Geist and Darshan Jesrani) employ the same rocksteady thump clap rhythm that graces many of their releases, but loosen up their production considerably, harnessing together liquid synths and raygun stabs with a slack, pre-MIDI feel – displaying an obvious debt to predecessors like Gina X in the process.

K-ROCK
NEW DEAL EP
REPHLEX CAT050 12"+7"

It gets harder and harder to figure out what year it's. Graffiti writer/raver/B-boy Kelly Barnett's follow up to two EPs for Ed DMX's Breakin' label bears a dual copyright for 1997 and 2002, but the tracks here represent an electro-Techno amalgam that could be heard in the right context, claim a birthdate in any year from the late 80s onward. Confounding retro singlemindedness, *New Deal* runs from early House tributes ("Baby Wants To Ride") to freestyle-infused ghetto Tech ("Black On White") to bass-heavy 'Ardkore anthems garnished with video game bleeps ("The Fiddler"). The bonus 7" featuring vocalist Linda Lovelace is even more schizo, flashing clumsy breakbeats, disco wail, Hoover bass and 80s Top 40 snippets like four faces at once.

CHARLES MANIER
BANG BANG LOVER
GHOSTLY INTERNATIONAL GI9 12"

MATTHEW DEAR/ JOHN SELWAY
STEALING MOVES
SPECTRAL SOUND SPC3 12"

Charles Manier, fresh off Ghostly's *Disco Nouveau* compilation, offers up more jittery EBM. "Uncompromised Awareness" shudders under the strain of a dark arpeggio so flat and tuneless, it could be Schoenberg gone electro while the hollow, jerking "I Can't Leave" bubbles up from underground, drenched in dank delay and throwing off gasping vocals like clammy scraps of rubber. James Cotton shimmers up to him for "Bang Bang Lover (Dance Mix)", another shredded document from the Rockit Files.

Itchier still is Matthew Dear's "Stealing Moves", a minimal rubdown that gets under your skin as piercingly as a junky's imaginary insects. If Techno had a 'jump up' offspring, this would surely be its anthem: the pogoing bassline flips the offbeat kick drum as effortlessly as an acrobat tossing a partner around. John Selway's "CSM Remix" doesn't so much steal Dear's moves as create a new routine entirely: shorn of Dear's athletic funk, it depicts the trapeze artist *through the stars in her eyes* rather than her muscular limbs.

MCKTWO & SHORTYRAW
NATURAL TENDENCY/WHAT ABOUT THE MUSIC
ALTERED VIBES BATTERSEA PARK AV006 12"

Infinite Cycle's MCKtwo and Shortyraw offer up a conscious boast rap on "Natural Tendency" with *"styles outlastin' the pain of a migraine without taking your aspirin"*, but "What About The Music" occasionally strays from conscious to curmudgeonly, tilting at industry windmills. If their lyrics focus on hating the game, their beats shrug it off with cool indifference, fusing lazy breaks with easygoing piano loops. DJ Stix's remix is less jackadaisical but still plenty laid back, leaning on bass melodies and soundtrack strings, while Gadji takes a detour near El Segundo, dropping a jaunty Manachi horn line over a breakbeat harder than suntempered clay.

VARIOUS
MIAMI INTERNAL AFFAIRS (THE INVESTIGATION)
MASS TRANSIT/BETA BODEGA COALITION MTA05/BB9 0 12"

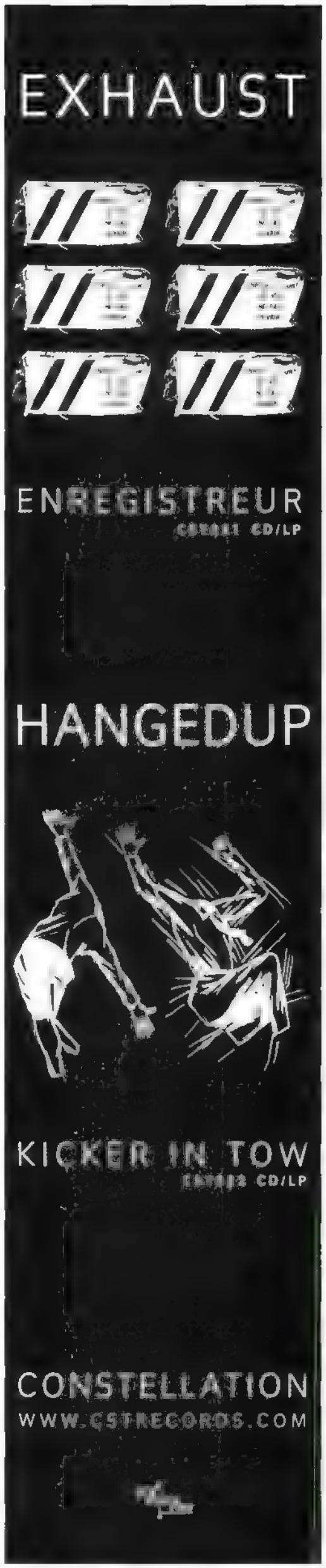
Beta Bodega may cast themselves as Black Bloc negationists, but they're not afraid to take a request or two. Datathief's "Advanced Social Engineering" wraps its dystopian polemic in a grim and groovy electro pulse, playing vocoded charges of *"US culture terror tactics"* off shuddering arpeggios that harken back to I F, Interdimensional Transmissions and 1997's electro revival. Simulants's "Pressure Point" is a grinding, Acid-splashed mashup of drum 'n' bass and electro, while Otto Von Schirach's "Pandemonium Intelligence" gets at least half its title right: it's a chaotic explosion of splintered breakbeats and DSP filters on the fritz. Silicon Scally's ruthlessly efficient beatbox stomper, "Trasnmito 001", is reprised from 1999's *Psychological Operations In Guerrilla Warfare* compilation. Only three years down the line, the *"martial law"* refrain isn't quite so jokey.

MAX DE WARDENER
STOPS
ACCIDENTAL AC04 12"

DOCTOR ROCKIT
VESELKA'S DINER
LIFELIKE LL15 12"

Many a producer has been said to have 'pulled out all the stops' in production, but the metaphor rarely hits home. Max De Wardener's "Stops" is surely one of the more unusual discs to hit the electronic music market this year, seeing how it is recorded entirely on the pipe organ. "Until My Blood Is Pure" is a quiet exercise in counterpoint: pointillism, marching forward unsteadily like a cut and spliced fugue, while "NS" sets glowing tonal beacons afloat like paper lanterns launched downstream. The B-side's two tracks offer more contemporary treats for the glitch-addicted: running De Wardener's pungent organ tones through the digital sieve and shaking out neat, conical piles of silvertoned silt. "Hundreds And Thousands" anchors fidgety click rhythms in terra firma dub basslines, while "Ant" thrashes this way and that like a torn banner, buffeted by a heavy wind.

Matthew Herbert's latest foray as Doctor Rockit, worlds away from the anticapitalist crunch of his *Mechanics Of Destruction*, returns to the dozy House of his "Café Flore". "Veselka's Diner" is a lilting House track pairing gently pulsing percussion with piano, accordion, alto clarinet and restrained horns – chamber House at its finest, even if it is a bit lo-cal compared to the New York institution from which it takes its name. On the flip, Herbert debuts a new pseudonym, Transformer, with "Idle Pop", an understated bit of lo-fi whimsy as rickety as a rain battered tin roof, and as sticky as a spit soaked lollipop.



Dub

Reviewed by Steve Barker

DENNIS BROWN/KING TUBBY
LIVE AFTER YOU/DUB
OBSERVER GOLD OBS001 10"

With Observer Gold's recent reissues of Niney, Attack Gold's Bunny Lee productions and Glimmer Roots' critical Congos tunes, the 10" vinyl format is increasingly the choice sound carrier for re-pressing 'revive reggae'. This one is recommended for its horns dub, where Tubby puts extreme filtering echo and reverb angles on the drum, percussion and bass mixing desk channels. As a technical exercise, this is Tubby at his electronic best. The flip has an extended horns version of Gregory Isaacs's "Rock On".

DEEPCHILD
CHOCOLATE DUBS
DUMPHUCK DH4000 CD

Rick Bull, aka Deepchild, is a member of the Australian electronic collective Clan Analogue, a core member of DumpHuck Industries whose output supports humanitarian causes such as Amnesty International. His new set follows 2000's *Hymns From Babylon*. It's a series of funk-blended tracks, distinguished by seductive undulating, velvety bleeps, snatched R&B vocals and smoothed out glitch textures – Guidance filtered though Burial Mix. As sexy and addictive as nu dub electronica gets.

GHETTO PRIEST WITH STEVEN BOGLE
DRY BONE
GREEN TEA GTT010 10"

SOFA SURFERS
SELLING SOULS
KLEIN 5504626 12"

Ghetto Priest has an album slated for release on the resuscitated On-U Sound label, while Steven Bogle is a member of 3 Head, whose debut album was only released in Japan, courtesy of the Audio Active/Dry & Heavy axis. For this limited 10" edition, Adrian Sherwood's still unissued original doomy mix gets reupholstered into a dancehall thudder by Birmingham's Groove Corporation. Making Buju Banton sound like a *Popstar* reject, Bogle's bass rasp DJ delivery is the key to the track's appeal.

"Selling Souls" is the first track from the Viennese Sofa Surfers' new album *Encounters* and it features MC Santana – a young GI kid and Jungle MC plucked from a travelling sound system – who obviously learned all his English after being locked in a room with early London drum 'n' bass 12"s for company. His education pays off in his ultra spiky delivery. Kevin 'The Bug' Martin's short, sharp remix slices up the beats and rubs down the bass, isolating the raw voice and rebaking the mix until it falls apart.

BOBBY KONDERS FEAT MASSIVE SOUNDS
A LOST ERA IN NYC 1987-1992
INTERNATIONAL DEEJAY GIGOLOS GIGOLO93 CD

Not necessarily reggae or dub, but an early expression of Deep House before and beyond Garage. While others aimed for purity of feeling, Bobby Konders sought miscegenation and truth. His love of reggae and dub is evident in the early work collected here, not just in the legendary "The Poem", which extensively samples Mutabaruka, but in his use of space and texture. The reggae eventually took over completely, and now he runs Massive B as a sound system and outlet for 7" prereleases only.

KEITH HUDSON
RASTA COMMUNICATION
GREENSLEEVES GREWS CD

The late Keith Hudson's ability to divide the loyalties of hardcore reggae fans is a sure indication of something going on outside the genre's mainstream. In *NME*'s best albums list of 1978, *Rasta Communication* was sandwiched in between Captain Beefheart's *Shiny Beast* and Jim Morrison's *An American Prayer*. He also made the best albums list the previous year with *Brand*, which previewed some of this one's rhythms in dub workouts. Hudson's vocals may be an acquired taste, but his rhythms are rich in both influence and execution. Deploying Hawaiian guitar and disembodied harmony singing, he created some of the most atmospheric work in reggae, some of it threatening and confrontational. Recorded at Chalk Farm studios and remixed at King Tubby's by Jammy, this first time on CD release is a straight reissue, excepting the addition of a 12" mix of punk favourite "Nuh Skin Up", complete with skittering syn drums.

LIGHTNING HEAD
STUDIO DON
BEST SEVEN/SONAR KOLLEKTIV
SB004/SB7009 CD

Lightning Head is none other than Glen 'Bigga' Bush, one half of Rockers Hi Fi. Commissioned to produce a 'classic' 7" for the label, he came up with the hybrid dancehall sound of "Me And Me Princess". In the process, he unwittingly created the template for this album's fusion of Jamaican and Latin styles, with the emphasis on Brazil Natucada rhythms and dub techniques, son montuno piano lines and funk riffs, reggae offbeats and loping basslines bed down together and do what's natural. An impressive debut.

MISTY IN ROOTS
ROOTS CONTROLLER
REAL WORLD RW104 CD

It has been 12 years since the Misty In Roots collective last produced any new material. *Roots Controller* breaks the drought, combining old selections with fresh recordings. Given their close association with the Rock (sic) Against Racism movement and their support for the emergent Zimbabwe, Misty In Roots were always more of a cultural institution than a mere group. Two tracks from their first release, *Live At The Counter Eurovision*, feature here, alongside tunes from *Earth* and *Musi-O-Tunya*. But the absence of their most commercially successful single, "Jah Jah Bless Africa", and their most militant soundwise track, "Peace And Love", is disappointing. Though it can never match the immediacy of their debut, the new material here finds Misty in good form.

LEE 'SCRATCH' PERRY
BAFFLIN' SMOKE SIGNAL
HEARTBEAT HB252 CD LP

From the last days of his soon to be torched Black Ark studio emerges another essential set of rare, Lee Perry productions. *Bafflin' Smoke Signal* features tunes previously unreleased, new to CD or alternate and extended versions from some of Perry's most militant and spiritually motivated artists. However, the CD's takes of Devon Irons's "Ketch Vampire" and Brent Dowe's "Down Here In Babylon" lack the propulsive horns gracing superior versions elsewhere. For dedicated lovers of Scratch, temptation arrives with its batch of Upsetter rare grooves, such as "Lizard Stick", "Natty Take Over" and "Set Up Yourself". The title track is a wryly rapped commentary on the selection of whichever pope was then ascending to Babylon thronedom, delivered over one of Scratch's quirkiest rhythms. In contrast, Junior Murvin's eerie "I Was Appointed" delivers an anti contraception message milked from a Papal Bull.

THE ROOTSMAN
THE ROOTSMAN PRESENTS NEW TESTAMENT
METEOSOUND/SELECT CUTS SC33406 CD/LP

THE ROOTSMAN MEETS MUSLIMGAUZE
AL AQSA INTIFADA
THIRD EYE MUSIC TEM012 CD

Two sides of Bradford's The Rootsman clash in these new releases. As the title says, *New Testament* is the 'now thing', with The Rootsman going after a more contemporary HipHop and R&B feel. Bongo Chilli and Betty Blue turn in the strongest performances from the album's list of relative newcomers, who contribute guest vocals and DJ chat; but the voice of an old stalwart, Mike Brooks, sweetly floats "Higher Place".

In a more radical style, The Rootsman meets his late friend from over the Pennines, Bryn Jones, aka Muslimgauze, on a track jointly recorded way back when. The six takes on this limited edition (500) CD single get progressively more brutal, right up to the final mix when Muslimgauze totally breaks it down with a version that will truly test the evil of compression wherever it may be found.

SUBCULTURE SOUNDSYSTEM
DARKNESS + LIGHT
ELECTRON SOUL ESOUL001 CD

Another late entry into the nu dub electronica arena, the Subculture DJs Clive Subculture, Smart Monkey and Mr Ed have been gigging through Central London for a while now, while contributing to compilations for Tokyo's Play label and also on UK's Free Radical Sounds. Using dub techniques as a production filter allows their wide-ranging influences play within the mix. How else could they patch together Krautrock, Sonic Youth and Psychic TV, except in a dubwise style?

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[RECIPROCESS] VOL. 1: BOVINE LIFE AND/OR/VS. KOMET [BLEEP 10]
First in that new series of collaborative CDs, feature Frank Bretschneider and Chris Dooks playing together, solo or remixing each other'work

ANDREW DUKE: SPRUNG [BLEEP 12]
Sprung is organic, wet sounding techno skittering along the broadband spectrum from scurrying subtleties to low pulsing rumbles, brushing different areas of the sonic spectrum

SPACEHEADS: LOW PRESSURE [BLEEP 14]
Spaceheads mix the raw emotional sound of breath with the banging of wood on skin, and push it through the blips, crackle and distortion of pixelated electronic noise. Their 7th album hangs on lazy grooves and thick harmonised trumpet chords, sleazy deep beat brass and crushed up metallic drumbeats. Contains remixes by Graham Massey (808 State) and the Bleach Boys

WANG INC.: RISOTTO IN 4/4 [BLEEP 15]
Rice has numerous grades, various colours and shapes which can be combined to work out an infinite collection of recipes. At the same time, a micro rhythm as the 4/4 gave birth to several musical forms. In Wang inc's electronic kitchen both combine the organic nature of the stomach, with the arcane resources of the mind but never forgets to get your feet involved

Electronica

Reviewed by Ken Hollings

CINEMA
BEFORE THE DARK
DOMINO WIGL113 CD

In wistful homage to the movie soundtrack, Glasweg an duo Crawford Tait and Gregor Reid present a series of borrowed moments that they don't quite know what to do with. Keyboards, guitar and analogue synths trace smoky outlines in the projector's beam. They recall the delicate progressions of Francis Lai and the suave masculinity of Lalo Schifrin, but without any great sense of purpose. The playing is clean and meticulous throughout, except it's let down by live bass and drums that can't stay focused on the task, especially when stuck in the album's usual mid-tempo range. Things come together on the faster paced "After Dark" and "Almost There", while "Lost" has a rippling cosmic feel, but it's hard to imagine what effect they're striving for.

DEPTH CHARGE
SPILL
DC RECORDINGS DC50 CD

Since the release of *Nine Deadly Venoms* in 1994, John Saul Kane has made a career of cruising the games arcades and back alleys of our darkest cultural assumptions. Rough edged, dirty minded and with a flighty sense of melody, his ragged electronic funk always contained the right snatch of dialogue from exactly the wrong movie. Edited together for the first time on CD, are some of his finest selections on 12" from the squealing tyres and spluttering male hysteria of "Number 9" to the brutal gender play of "Cool It Vixen". Also on board are a clutch of previously unreleased tracks, including remixes of "Sex Sluts In Heaven" from 1999's *Lust* and the wildly undisciplined "Disciple Of The Blade".

ANDREW DUKE
SPRUNG
BIPHOP BLEEP12 CD

Recording and performing live since 1987, running his own Cognition Audioworks label and presenting a weekly online radio show to more than five million listeners, allegedly Andrew Duke creates electronic music that sounds like it has a reason for living. Once past the spot-welded beats and squeals of "Hell Yeah", Duke lights out for darker territory filled with scabrous organic forms, keenly aware of their function and adapted to survive in even the harshest of environments. "Crablike" paces and frets, "Chromosome 20" exhales menacingly, biding its time, "Knot Rocket" swells and croaks impassively, while the deeply incised rhythms of "Shark Circles" and "Ut Jt" ensure you know exactly whose world you're in.

TOMAS JIRKU
ENTROPY
INTRVERSION INTR005 CD

Less reserved and more prepared to engage its listeners than Jirku's previous *Variants* release for Canada's Alien8 label, *Entropy* manages to confound its title by building structures out of gentle chaotic drifts. Dub is redefined as the distance and symmetry between isolated events. The fragment becomes both the index and indicator of space. "Isothermal" and "Exothermic" make hesitant yet discernible progress out of second guessing themselves. Subaquatic 303 and off-kilter beats echo from deep within "Adiabatic". Acted upon by other forces, the confident minimalism of "Isentropic" and "Cyclic" gives this collection a sense of coherence establishing sparse guitar arm frameworks out of strict repetition from their opening moments.

JEFF MILLS
AT FIRST SIGHT
REACT REACT229 CD

When Mills introduced his soundtrack to Fritz Langs *Metropolis* at its first London screening, he spoke of his interest in creating new electronic music for sci fi movies. Not surprisingly, his first album of new material in more than two years flashes with futuristic imagery and asides. With its grim allusions and baleful grinding rhythms, "Punisher Last Confession" harks back to Underground Resistance days, while "More Black Matter" and "Stark (Detroit Story)" echo and develop themes Mills first started exploring on *Metropolis*. To counter the impression that the future can only be glimpsed fleetingly through the rear view mirror, "Urbana" soars lush and light into a world of its own devising, "Fantasia" throbs and reverberates with new creativity, "Mom" plays with alien dissonance and "See This Way" sets its sights on the timeless.

OGUSURU NORIHIDE
HUMOUR
CARPARK CARPARK15 CD

Bringing together two previously self released CD collections, entitled *Study* and *I* respectively, Norihide's first release for New York's Carpark offers a circumspect selection of quiet moods, dusty corners and blurred edges. The musical equivalent of moments spent staring out of the window lost in thought, each track is an *arrangement of simple figures and melodies for* guitar, piano and the occasionally muffled beat. Acoustic space is manipulated to allow piano to interact with itself, overlaying reversed echoes and distant signals. In comparison, the material from *I* seems the sturdier and more keenly delineated of the two sets. Even so, the playing remains unfussy and meditative throughout, capturing the sound of a world drifting aimlessly by.

POLMO POLPO
THE SCIENCE OF BREATH
SUBSTRACTIF SUBSF05 CD

For his debut release on Alien8 subsidiary Substractif, Toronto-based Polmo Polpo, aka Sandro Perri, has created four brief compositions for muted strings and desiccated effects dedicated to various breathing techniques, which are described at some length on the CD's elegant gatefold packaging. These pieces are used in turn to frame four much larger and more expansive tracks, previously available only in extremely limited 12" formats on Perri's own Aud Sensa label. Impressively dense layers of heavy distortion are piled up over deep reverberating delays. Rhythmic patterns slowly evolve, sounding as if they've been folded into the mix while lapsteel and cello are stretched into loose melodic shapes. Murkily seductive, like nitrogen bubbles in the brain.

DJ SCUD/RICH KID/PANACEA
MURDER SOUND
AMBUSH 2 CD

Bulked up and stereo enhanced, this is dancehall winding for those who get off on the smell of crack whores and cordite fumes. Boasting such high stepping titles as "Badman Time", "Jungle Warrior" and "Bloodclaat Gangsta Youth", DJ Scud and Rich Kid get so rough with their sound they don't even feature together, but present their own separate selection of tracks. Instead, Violence is swiftly and crudely exposed as the universal rhythm, and the taste of hospital food is only an ill judged breath away. Just don't blink during the face off when Panacea takes his own sweet but deadly time over remixing "Kill Or Be Killed". As serious as you want it to be, bwoy.

SIGNAL TERRITORY
SIGNAL TERRITORY 1
RX TX RXTX001 CD

JADVIGA
NONIM
RX TX RXTX002 CD

These two releases mark an auspicious beginning for Rx tx, a subdivision of Slovenia's Projekt Atol, which is a daring and thoughtful enterprise designed to facilitate communication between art and technology. Commissioned for the 1997 Kassel Documenta, *Signal Territory 1* was produced (with Random Logic at Frankfurt's Horsepel Studio) from the archives of Makrolab, a mobile listening post and research station operated by Projekt Atol to study radio signals in fragile environments. Ghost voices recite strings of meaningless numbers over atmospheric static, lonely scientists complain in one sided conversations about septic cuts that won't heal and the dubious social value of their work. This is bleakly rewarding theatre for the mind. By comparison, Thomas Sustar's tiny, restless miniatures for electronic sound on *Nonim* are as clean and clear as a cartoon smile, especially the fragmented lounge themes of "Lobotov Fracture" and the cheery Ray Scott homage running through "Catwalk".

SPACEHEADS
LOW PRESSURE
BIPHOP BLEEP14 CD

From the days of Dislocation Dance and Biting Tongues to Homelife and Toolshed, Manchester's new age of mutant Easy Listening continues its ascendancy. Further light is shed with the dawning of the seventh Spaceheads album, where Andy Diagram's fluid and precise trumpet meshes with Richard Harrison's deft rhythmic weavings. This is dub-heavy ambience for the 21st century global village; arrangements of technology and musicianship that acknowledge there are no barriers anymore. Standouts include the title track and its edgy Beach Boys remix, "The Lugano Affair" – a tribute to Neil Richardson's Studio 2 classic, "The Riviera Affair", featuring Homelife's Paddy Steer on bass – and the untrammelled vitality of "Storm Force". Graham Massey's remix of "Trance Fig 8" from Spaceheads' *Angel Station*.

SWAYZAK
DIRTY DANCING
STUDIO K7 K7128 CD

It's clear that David Brown and James Taylor can program a mean set of beats, but uncomfortable delivery and thin lyrical content suggest that utilising vocals isn't their strong suit and that this is another group of electronic musicians who rely too much on software rather than ability.

NOBUKAZU TAKEMURA
WATER'S SUITE
EXTREME SPECIAL EDITIONS XLTD005 CD

Served up in six untitled parts, this project is *driven to fill up as much of a CD's running time* as feasibly possible using the Yamaha ML15 sound module. Takemura has some interesting comments to make in his sleevenotes about the reaction of MIDI equipment to power cuts and earthquakes, and about his fleeting desire to reprogram his own DNA, but his conceptual imagination doesn't quite stretch to creating anything actually worth listening to. It's the same old digital bouillabaisse, overcooked to the point of blandness. "Maybe this work sounds like I'm using DSP," Takemura observes, "but all of it is made by the sound module using MIDI data." Glad that's sorted then.

WILT
RADIO 1940
AD NOISEAM ADN19 CD

Some time ago James Keeler left his Heavy Metal influences behind him to experiment with sound collage as Wilt, electronically tweaking acoustically produced material and musique concrète into sepulchral explorations of Ambient's dark underside. Not so much an evocation of a shadowy half remembered past, as an exploration of its ideas, dreams and architecture, *Radio 1940* is an ambitious set of meditations that range from the monstrous exhalations of "Social Occult Machine" to the *opaque tintinnabulation of* "Pale Skin Memoirs".

SUSUMU YOKOTA
THE BOY AND THE TREE
LEAF/SKINTONE BAY25 CD

Inspired by his move into the fresh air of Tokyo's outer suburbs, combined with the wolfish ecological thrust of Hayao Miyazaki's animated classic *Princess Mononoke*, Susumu Yokota takes his listeners for a long walk beneath the branches of ancient trees. Nature respires, sprites dance and gentle breezes set up their own half-conscious rhythms. Sounds shimmer and ripple as if they are happening by themselves, but it's not hard to discern Yokota's hand carefully shaping and directing the music's easy flow of effects. Although the mood is amiable enough on the delicate "Fairy Link" and the undulating "Grass Tree And Stone", a darker view asserts itself on the desolate, frozen stasis of "Blood And Snow".

Global

Reviewed by Clive Bell

MOHAMMED AMÂN
THE TRADITION OF HEJAZ
OCORA C560158 CD

Classical and modern Arabic poetry sung in refined, melismatic style by Saudi master Mohammed Amân. Born in Mecca, he represents the Hejâz tradition of the Red Sea coast, which has survived more or less underground beneath the austerity of the sacred cities Mecca and Medina. Mohammed Amân plays oud, and his group features qanun zither, violin and percussion. The playing is excellent and the 'stumbling' rhythms are interesting – the musical practice may stretch back to Mecca's heyday in the eighth century. Unfortunately, the sound of this Radio France recording is not particularly alluring. The instruments could sound richer, and the voice seems chilly and compressed.

B'NET MARRAKECH
CHAMA'A
LEMPRENTE DIGITALE ED13144 CD

B'Net Marrakech means Women Of Marrakech (see Global Ear, *The Wire* 222) and *Chama'a* translates as *Candle*. Lead singer Malika Mahjoubi likes to dance with a tray on her head, balancing lighted candles, glasses and a teapot. Mahjoubi's tireless, powerful voice, pitched low, is one of this 15 year old female quintet's most powerful assets. Another is the headlong oud and violin playing of Aziza Ait-Zouin. All five members sing and drum in fiercely tight ensemble, making this a very exciting album. Songs range from popular urban chaabi to borrowings from the earthy trance of the Gnawa and all are quite short, enabling the group to cover a lot of ground in 13 tracks.

EGSCHIGLEN
ZAZAL
FELMAY FY8037 CD

Now that the eerie whistling and monstrous growling of Mongolian throat singing, or khoomii, have become more familiar in the West, it's time to recognise that not all khoomii groups are the same. In the case of the Tuvans Huun Huur-Tu, for example, you suspect they might have a few Tom Waits or Beefheart albums in their rock collection, whereas the three women and three men of Egschiglen are graduates of Ulaan Baatar conservatory in Mongolia, and favour a cinematic, even symphonic style. Gongs crash and horses whinny at the start of "Tain Salhi", by Japanese composer Isao Tomita. The lyrics are about Genghis Khan's exploits, and you realise that Egschiglen's agenda includes bringing Mongolian epic poetry into the modern world. Throat singer Amra even tries his hand at rapping to the beat. This is ambitious but highly accessible music, often beautiful, as when the morinhuur fiddle soars like a cello, doubled by flute-like overtone singing ("Yamaan I Boodog", about how to roast a goat). It's also charmingly old fashioned in the rhythm department's use of woodblocks and tentative drum kit. Egschiglen are in the strange double bind constructed by the West for World Music groups: a heritage bubble, in which they pose in the countryside wearing absurdly colourful trad costumes, while in reality they're international shoppers and highflyers. Another photo catches them striding across a piazza, all Italian suiting, shades and blowdry hair, in search of a decaf latte. I say good luck to them.

GAMELAN OF CENTRAL JAVA
II CEREMONIAL MUSIC
FELMAY FY8042 CD

Songs for somnolent smiths and other metalworkers, this is the opposite end of the gamelan spectrum from the scattergun highjinks of Bali. Although the roots of gamelan lie in Java's Hindu-Buddhist past, 15th century Islamic leaders built specially huge gamelans to interest people in the new religion. During the Sekaten festival, celebrating the birth and death of Mohammed, gamelan is played almost continuously for a week. These recordings were made in the Great Mosque and the Mangkunagaran Palace, Surakarta – chattering crowds and the odd squeaky toy add to the ambience. Sekaten pieces start soft and snail-paced, eventually hitting a muscular climax of extraordinary forcefulness.

THE GYUTO MONKS TANTRIC CHOIR
THE PERFECT JEWEL: SACRED CHANTS OF TIBET
RYKODISC RCD10626 CD

The detail and depth of these subterranean chants, recorded by Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart, are extraordinary to behold, and by the time the massive drums and trumpets enter halfway through, we are bathing in low end luxury. Founded in Tibet in 1474, the Gyuto Tantric University fled from the 1959 Chinese invasion into India. Musically, the point of this singing style is for each voice to produce multiphonics, eerie chords emphasising particular harmonics, and these close up recordings, made in 1995 in a US studio, allow the listener to be immersed in this epic sound as never before.

ALI AKBAR KHAN
FROM FATHER TO SON
AMMP 0209 CD

Ali Akbar Khan is master of the sarod, a lute with Afghani roots, which has a powerful, crisp sound and makes fariness buzz than a sitar. Now aged 80, he has founded a college bearing his name in Berkeley, California, and this May 2001 concert was a college benefit. There's an air of masterclass about the performance, as Khansahib introduces his 19 year old son Alam, and son and dad trade increasingly fiery phrases. The sleeve has a nice photo of Alam aged three, grappling with a sarod, while Khansahib relaxes with a cigarette. An hour-long rendition of "Ragini Puriya Dhanasri" is presented. Tabla player Swapan Chaudhuri joins as the mood shifts from sombre intro to playful exchange, and finally to breakneck ending.

LIANG MINGYUE (QIN)
PARTING AT YANGGUAN
WERGO SM1706 CD

For the third century Chinese literary scholar the qin zither was a must have accessory, as indispensable as a laptop to today's students. Summoning Taoist thoughts while contemplating a craggy landscape wreathed in mist would be unthinkable without this austere black instrument and its seven silken strings. All the better, then, that two of the eight exquisite pieces here deal with liberation through getting utterly bladdered. "Wine Madness" is beautifully transcribed in the fat accompanying booklet, and climaxes in the tricky ornaments of the "Immortal Vomiting Sound". This fine CD is a reissue of a 1977 LP, and very well recorded. Liang Mingyue was in his early thirties then, but had already studied qin for 20 years. Photos of hand positions and copious notes make this a fascinating introduction to a very old and very odd instrumental tradition.

RAHUL SHARMA
MUSIC OF THE HIMALAYAS
REAL WORLD RW105 CD

Rahul Sharma is the 30 year old son of Shiv Kumar Sharma, a household name in India for his film music and performances on the santoor. Shiv Kumar, born in Kashmir, transformed this hammered dulcimer from a Kashmiri folk item to a fully fledged classical instrument, capable of holding down an hour long raga. Here his son takes a look back at the santoor's roots, performing four pieces based on Kashmiri folk tunes. He's accompanied by tablas and folk percussion. This is a pretty but somewhat lightweight album, recorded live at an Italian festival in 2000. The sound is nowhere near as rich as Shiv Kumar's studio album for Real World (Sampradaya), nor is Rahul as musically ambitious as his dad. Shiv Kumar's airy tremolos, hovering like dragonflies, are one of the wonders of Indian music, and a tough act to follow, as I'm sure they often say in those Indian musical families.

SPARKLE
NAMASTE PRESENTS JAMANA HAMRO LAAGI HO...
CAPITAL TRIP CT360 CD

Sparkle are five dignified young women from Nepal, not a country famous for girl groups, but Sparkle may represent the tip of a musical iceberg. Nepal became a democracy in 1990, and suddenly, they claim, everyone wanted to form a group. Sparkle were on stage and performing before they'd had time to learn any guitar chords. They sing "simple love songs", for example about wanting a husband", explains the sleeve sweetly. The cod reggae of "Dinu Paradana" goes, *"I don't want a dowry, I just want your love"*. And the music? Sadly, Sparkle have opted for a bland synthesized sound, with barely a guitar in evidence. They sing charmingly, rather like Indonesian pop, but the whole album is anonymous synth-pap that will no doubt make them superstars at home.

TA EPEIROTIKA
GREEKS & INDIANS
SARASWATI SARA003 CD

This is a Greek concert recording (sleevenotes entirely in Greek) of a Greeks meet Indians project, which originated in Athens in 1999, and toured the UK earlier this year with a slightly different personnel. Rakesh Chaurasia's flute, Petroloukas Chalkias's clarinet, plus Greek violin, tablas and the two singers, Devashish Dey and Antones Kuritses, all take delight in framing each other's improvisations. There's plenty of common ground here – as a rule, the Indians bring a warm, sensuous quality to the harder Greek material, led by Chalkias's endlessly inventive Eprotic clarinet.

TIBETAN SINGING BOWL ORCHESTRA
LIVE RECORDINGS FROM THE PATH
NVA ORGANISATION NO NUMBER CD

ANI CHOYING DROLMA
LIVE RECORDINGS FROM THE PATH
NVA ORGANISATION NO NUMBER CD

At the other extreme of Nepal's musical life lies the Tibetan Singing Bowl Orchestra, a meditative chiming percussion performance by two masters based in Kathmandu. One of few facts known about the Bowls is that tiny amounts of the seven metals alloyed in their construction can be ingested for homeopathic treatment. These particular recordings stem from an ambitious event staged in 2000 in a remote Scottish glen. Over two hours the audience was conducted on a walk from Scotland (a wishing tree, a cairn, Fairy Knolls) to the Himalayas (a butter lamp cave, kites, prayer flags). High in the glen, stages were built for the Singing Bowls, and separately for Tibetan nun Ani Choying Drolma, who sings here alone. Alone, that is, apart from the odd ambient rumble from a passing jet. Her effortless, calm, pentatonic singing can be heard reverberating back off the nearest mountain. A fine pair of records that provokes thought about attitudes to place in Celtic and Tibetan traditions.

VIETNAM: NGUYEN VINH BAO ENSEMBLE
OCORA C560160 CD

Highly refined Vietnamese chamber music, well recorded in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon). A quartet including moon-shaped lute, pear shaped lute and fiddle is led by Nguyen Vinh Bao, a sprightly 84 year old, on the large dan tranh zither. Related to Chinese traditions, Vietnamese music always seems brighter, a gleaming, subtly ornamented twang. Each piece allows improvisation and complex variations within an agreed melodic framework. The differences between the players, all ornamenting their lines, results in a colourful, slowly evolving kaleidoscopic texture. This kind of scholarly music would be threatened with extinction were it not for the devotion of private groups determined to swim against the global tide. Leader Nguyen Vinh Bao also writes a charming essay about his ideals and teaching methods: "I often get annoyed when the whole world admires a musician's finger mechanism without mentioning his brain. When I watch the fingers of one of my pupils at work, I see everything that is going on in his head. It is not his fingers, but his head which interests me."

HipHop

Reviewed by Hua Hsu

ANDREW BRODER
MODERN HITS EP
DINKYTOWN DT003 CD

The world's too fast to stay sad for long, and Andrew Broder – otherwise known as Ninja Tune's Fog – ditches his eclectic blues for a fleeting peek at iced down medallions, black on black beef and the fast life. This surprisingly entertaining EP takes some of rap's more recognisable recent hits and replaces their original beats with Broder's own classicist rock noodlings. He turns Outkast's "The Whole World" into a family vacation, with papa strumming a carefree progression and the kids clapping along festively. Edan drops some smooth lyrics over Broder's disarmingly pretty marriage of protest folk and batucada-like percussion. MF Doom finds himself on an island in the sun, chopping coconuts and a sentimental guitar line backing his metal-faced musings on "Ain't Nothing". Curtain's rise and Jay-Z's dastardly "The Takeover" takes on the hammy air of a slapstick comedy caper. His barbs are still potent, but how mean can anyone sound when backed by a whirlybird piano and overzealous tambourines? Jigga's rival, the suddenly crazy Nas, gets an even more drastic makeover as his proud "One Mic" rises above sense and the city only to find Badly Drawn Boy waiting with a soft straitjacket.

CEE-KNOWLEDGE
SPACE IS THE PLACE
COUNTERFLOW CF024 12

It's one thing to trot down to the local guitar shop and find a ringer to drop some live flavour on a HipHop cut. It's a wholly different matter to enlist Sun Ra's Arkestra to remake one of the man's most recognisable tunes. Cee Knowledge, formerly known as Doodlebug from college kid favourites Digable Planets, masterminds this jazz thing, and despite some predictable rhymes chiding DJ Clue and apathy, it's an intriguing idea that comes off pretty well. Pitching the song down and shifting weight toward the bass, The Arkestra's horn section opts for solar discipline rather than outer limits, which is actually too bad. Lauretta Gooden does her best June Tyson impression but lacks the gravitational weight and almost infinity lift of Ra's original muse. Although CK's original stint as a Digable jazzbeau was built on an in the pocket Blue Note swing, it's good to see HipHop artists reaching for jazz that isn't merely a committee of potential bass and drum samples. Incidentally, this isn't the first time a HipHop artist has attempted to recreate a Sun Ra song – that honour goes to Canada's Sixtoo and his stab at "Astro Black" a few years back.

DJ IVORY
HEAR NO EVIL
BIG DADDY BD001 CD

Arms folded and chin aimed high, DJ Ivory of the P Brothers is locked in his B boy stance, awaiting all comers to deconstruct his secret story of 1988 era rap. *Hear No Evil* is a 60 minute brag masquerading as a contest masquerading as a mixtape, track titles deleted and challenge issued to anyone deep enough to name these tunes and claim some secret booty. Naturally, Ivory's crates are crazy and he plays The Bizzie Boyz' "Hold The Lafta" rather than their better known but still rare "Droppin' It", before losing it altogether and turning to the rival Busy Boys instead. Obscure doesn't necessarily mean good, and there are plenty of reasons why Rakim outlasted the Jazzy Jew or why Kane's "Ain't No Half Stepping" became an anthem while half these cuts languish sadly in history's dustbin. Still, there are enough reasons to salute Ivory's fingers. In our spoiled times it may seem like 1988 rap was merely a contest to see how many different songs a community could invent given a finite supply of breaks, but long-forgottens like Makeba And Scratch, The Cobra MCs, Sir IBU and The Krown Rulers testify to the resourcefulness one discovers when bounded. At one point everyone on this disc presumed there to be the champion sound, and most of them deserved the accolade. As Boston's TDS Mob closes the affair with the murky "Crushin Em", one can only wonder where it all went wrong.

D-STYLES
FELONIOUS FUNK
AUDIO RESEARCH AR010 12

Former Invisibl Skratch Pikl D Styles gets his band of brothers together for this scratch yourself silly slumber party. Given the emphasis on turntablism today on testing one's mettle against the fastest Jungle records set at 45 rpm it's almost disorienting to hear D-Styles, Q-Bert and Beat Junkies Babu and Melo D scratch against the slow methodical title cut. But when midnight passes and it's time to tell scary stories, it's D-Styles who emerges with the champion leaf. A dude who truly appreciates the gross and gory, his "The Murder Faktory" is a suggestive horror routine stitched from screams, effects and the occasional commercial break. The beat tracks our steps toward something truly frightening but never named, where handicaps and slamming doors sound the same. A man writhes in agony before D Styles pitches down, twiddles his digits and turns groans into cheers. Cawing crows reveal themselves to be hissing air and the lady from the ever popular *"I've fallen and I can't get up"* medical alert bracelet commercial sounds like nothing can rescue her.

EDAN
SPRAIN YOUR TAPE DECK EP
LEWIS LEWIS002 CD 12"

This EP collects three new songs and three CD only bonus tracks from sudden semi star Edan's debut, *Primitive Plus*. The consensus highlight here is "Let's Be Friends", a shy and awkward classic that harks back to a time when even macho rappers smiled. There's something beautifully simple and inspiring about this ode to friendship and good citizenship, and though few rappers have rhymed on record about lending each other constructive feedback, making friends and cooking dinner together, you know that's what a lot of these guys are thinking. *"Let's get together and help somebody,"* he suggests unabashedly, *"Let's save the bees/Let's save the cats/Let's buy some cats."* The lazy lope of "Emcees Smoke Crack" is like Premier in Cloud City, where he dreams of *"walking with spaceships"* and smoking aluminium. "Schoolly D Knew The Time" is his dusted tribute to Schoolly D, and "Beautiful Food" is a disturbingly zealous roll call of the meals of his dreams.

GOLD CHAINS
STRAIGHT FROM YOUR RADIO
TIGERBEAT6 MEOW056 CD

While his talented friend Kid606 plays the foul-mouthed brat who is secretly meticulous about his kicking and screaming, Topher Lafata strikes you as the true punk guided only by instinct, a powerful laptop and his putrid sense of humour. *Straight* is Lafata's second release as Gold Chains, a scummy booty bass savant who would come off as unconvincing, if he didn't sound so stark raving mad and driven. On the title cut, GC claims to have invented rhyming 10,000 years ago with the help of some snakes and a *"Chinese giant"*, nowadays, he specialises in *"teach[ing] the English language how to speak."* The problematic "Treat Your Cootchie Like A Maze" finds GC barking a series of four demands over a cold, oppressive Techno hop, a melodica solo halfway through does little for his cause, though the line about *"butterfly wings kissing your body tonight"* transforms the whole gambit into something halfway cute and cheeky. The rousing anthem "Let's Make It" is like a glitch hop Gary Glitter, replete with cooing background chorals and the faint suggestion of millions of worshipping fans (hopefully of age) typing along.

KILLER MIKE
AKSHON
COLUMBIA PROMO 12"

Despite his banal rantings on Outkast's "Snappin' And Trappin'" the lowlight of their otherwise classic *Stankonia* album, young Killer Mike is a bright, capable guy who, if pressed, can speak effusively about everyone from Zora Neale Hurston to Erykah. After a gusty guest spot on Outkast's "The Whole World", Mike debuts on his own with the hopscotch squelch and nasty, Acidic flares of "Akshon". According to Outkast's Andre, Mike's presence is *"enough to make a black ghost turn pale"*, and he proves it by galloping up and down an Earthtone III production as hard as life. Mike – who was tagged "Killer" by defeated MCs, not the police – *"separates lames from their chains"* and gnashes against the track like the twisted Heavy Metal trance dream it is. Sensing a little Miami Bass torque in there, Mike riffs off logo and scandal and puckers, *"Baby got back and it's in Baby Phat/Pardon my all for taking the cat"*.

SUCKA MCS
DA ALBUM
ACE FU ACEFU017 CD

Now here's an argument against democracy and the free market. The Sucka MCs hail from Iowa City, Iowa, and they're the type of self entitled suburban rap novelty act adored by droll indie rock types and joyless sophistcates who rue the violence and misogyny of 'mainstream rap'. This wouldn't be a particularly bad thing if the Suckas weren't so selfconsciously bad. As it is, *Da Album* is as subtle as a frat party and nowhere near as funny, and one gets the sense they deflect criticism by claiming to have never taken themselves seriously in the first place. "My Cell Phone" is a 'pass the mic' cut about answering the phone while "Smoke Dope 2 Get Bent" finds one of the group's especially laidback and unconvincing rappers summing up the whole endeavour. *"Who gives a fuck, motherfucker?"* "Skit" would be funny if there was the sense that The Suckas' sarcastic rendition of thug life weren't culled from the piggy rap videos they so despise. Records like these are like white kids applying whiteface for all white audiences, only it's not half as subversive as they think.

TRICK DADDY
IN DA WIND
SLIP N SLIDE 0756785333 12"

Many thought Trick Daddy to be a one hit wonder after 1999's "Nann" earned itself a place in the rap lexicon, but he's turned out to be one of the South's most stylish and self-consciously witty rappers. Trick is the consummate country showman, pushing his vowels with a fuck-all lean, kicking his feet up on the table and sucking through his gold fronts defiantly and proudly. "In Da Wind" is his 'love me or leave me alone' ultimatum, an autobiographical cut about the *"sugar water and mayonnaise sandwiches"* of his youth. Cee Lo, decked in *"velour to the floor"*, offers his elfin pipes for the chorus, and Big Boi arrives at the end to give his Southern brethren some perspective on the game. *"Movin' through the Dirty at a slow pimp's pace/Kinda like the tortoise and the hare and their race."*

VARIOUS
TURNTABLES BY THE BAY VOLUME 3
HIP HOP SLAM HHS029 CD LP

One gets the feeling that Billy Jam may one day be regarded as a sort of turntablist Alan Lomax (RIP), a field recording general who left no rockers unturned in his pursuit of the perfect scratch. Volume three of his excellent Bay Area turntablist series is a perfect example, as he finds room for superstars and bedroom amateurs alike. Turntablism's obsession with mental illness continues on "Schizophrenic DJ", an impressive collaboration pitting a Jack Dangers track against scratches, digs and left turns from San Jose's Golden Child and Fuse One. Occasional Dwarves collaborator DJ Marz offers the pretty "City Of Fork Yuen", a great song pinned down by stabs, the obligatory sooos and thin, anthemic sheets of rearranged synths. The Invisibl Skratch Pikliz Shigger Fragger rarity "Ah One, Two, Three Kut" makes its wax debut, and you forget that in 1996, guitars probably still outsold turntables. Q Bert tells it like it is on his "Wrist Wreckin' Skratch", as he cuts against Run-DMC at 45 rpm and kills speed. The surly MC Bas-1 phones up the customer service line to call out the biters in the city and beg for something new. *"We got a bunch of fucking Q Bert clones,"* he sighs into the receiver, before breaking down sucka DJ styles with his mouth.

Jazz & Improv

Reviewed by Brian Marley

BEVAN/BISHOP/ZERANG/EDWARDS
'NHAM
FOGHORN FOG03 CD

In 2001 tenor/bass saxophonist Tony Bevan convened this Anglo American quartet for a brief, and by all accounts successful, UK tour. The proof of the pudding is *'nham*, previously broadcast by the BBC on *Jazz On 3*. Trombonist Jeb Bishop and percussionist Michael Zerang, who earned their stripes in groups led by Ken Vandermark and latterly Peter Brötzmann, have one foot in improvisation and the other in free jazz. Only the first track approaches the headstrong bluster of free jazz, the others, "Scraps" in particular are spacious, varied, well-paced and characterful. Bevan, a fine group player, never allows his foghorn of an instrument to dominate proceedings. He, bassist John Edwards and the Chicagoans interact superbly on an imaginative and very satisfying set.

ANTHONY BRAXTON
SOLO (KÖLN) 1978
GOLDEN YEARS GY17 CD

Record store racks are groaning under the weight of Braxton discs, and the secondhand bins are just as full. So much music to choose from, so much of inconsistent quality. But his solo saxophone recordings are invariably a notch above the rest, as *Solo (Köln) 1978* attests. "Composition 8D" is reprised from the groundbreaking *For Alto*, the set features eight more Braxton compositions, plus the standard "You Go To My Head" and John Coltrane's "Impressions". That many of his improvisations are stunning is not just a question of inspirational flow and instrumental virtuosity – Each composition poses a challenge, establishing tight parameters that often severely restrict the range of musical activity, placing the improvisor in a difficult, almost impossible, situation. But the greater the challenge, the more Braxton appears to enjoy it. His pleasure carries over to the listener.

BRÖTZMANN/UUSKYLA/NIELSEN
FLYING FEATHERS
FMR 9110402 CD

BRÖTZMANN/PARKER/WERTMÜLLER
NOTHUNG
IN TONE 5 CD

The first of these Brötzmann-led trios is by far the rockier. Peeter Uuskyla relentlessly bludgeons his drum kit (he calls this technique "banging out into trance") and Peter Friis Nielsen's clanking bass guitar trades melody for rhythm. Brötzmann roars and shrieks in spectacular fashion, especially on "The Ravens Cry Ayt Dawn" (sic) and the ferocious "Mujko", but his most affecting playing on the title track takes his lead from Nielsen's surprisingly lyrical introduction. It's a brief oasis of calm. Otherwise, the music is loud, intense, somewhat mono-dimensional but not without merit.

Although the In Tone CD was recorded live, the music has greater presence and the sound is more lucid than on the studio bound *Flying Feathers*. The programme is more varied, too. On the four part suite "Nothung", Brötzmann works through his sonic bestiary: throttled goose, amorous loon, hungover bear raging bull. His tarogato wails, particularly effective on "Nothung Pt 3", where William Parker complements Brötzmann's Eastern lilt. Parker, a consummate double bassist, creates within the group's work a perfectly viable music of his own, always appropriate, always adventurous, and Michael Wertmüller is a much more subtle and simpatico drummer than Peeter Uuskyla. Brötzmannophiles will find *Nothung* of particular interest, yet it's also a good place for neophytes to begin.

COURAGE (WITH ROBERT CREELEY)
THE WAY OUT IS VIA THE DOOR
482 MUSIC 4821011 CD

Robert Creeley is a lyric poet of singular observation. He writes about everyday things without aggrandising them or himself, and each poem contains within it a necessary measure of silence. The silence acts as a buffer zone between each articulated thought and the distracting clamour of the world. Filling up the silences with music is, therefore, not only superfluous but actually counterproductive. John Mills (reeds, flute, keyboard), Steve Swallow (bass) and Chris Massey (drums) provide an abstract lite jazz backdrop for the poet's taut recitation of seven poems, some of them just poetic fragments. The tracks featuring the trio without Creeley are well played but rather dull.

EFZEG
BOOGIE
GROB 430 CD

John Lee Hooker is the surprise dedicatee of *Boogie*, given Efzeg's line-up of Boris Hauf (saxophones, electronics), Burkhard Stangl (guitars, devices), Dieb 13 (turntables) and Martin Siewert (guitar, lapsteel, electronics). The follow up to their 2000 Durian release, *Grain*, is roughly textured but delicately shaped, linear, minimal. The group sound is paramount, and comparisons with AMM are unavoidable. Parts of "Numa" sound like a grumbling choir of Keith Rowe. On the lengthy "Tor" Stangl reprises a technique he employed so successfully on *Schnee*, his erstwhile disc with Christof Kurzmann. Acoustic guitar chords are strummed absent-mindedly, heedless of the undertow of electric/electronic grit and detritus. Hauf's saxophones sound even less like horns than they did on *Grain*. The set closes with a fascinating Quicktime movie by Billy Rosz (videomixer, feedback cam), which mimics Efzeg's musical flux. In the pugnacious spirit of writer Thomas Bernhard, a note on the insert declares "Efzeg still repudiates acclaim from anyone still not repudiating the present Austrian government." I hereby repudiate the present Austrian government.

FIN TRIO
FIN TRIO
WIMPROZES 060801 CD

Although he's been making improvised music for the better part of four decades, Fred Van Hove's discography is surprisingly slim. Perhaps his greatest claim to fame is the punishing piano he played on Peter Brötzmann's *Machine Gun*. In marked contrast to that shriekfest, he has specialised in the provision of instant soundtracks for 1920s silent films by GW Griffiths, F Murnau, et al. His most recent recording to receive attention was 1998's *Flux* (Potlatch). In Fin Trio he is partnered by Nikos Veliotis (cello, Bachbow) and Ivo Vander Borght (percussion, saw). Because Van Hove is not a pithy player, less strong willed collaborators can find themselves matching his unhurried pace and discursive manner. To a degree, that's what happens here. It's a music of memorable moments. Best of all is the smeary "No Tango On Mars", featuring Van Hove on accordion.

MASASHI HARADA & BARRE PHILLIPS
VOLUMINOUS VENTURE
CADENCE CJR1128 CD

MASASHI HARADA ELECTRIC TRIO
OBLITERATION AT THE END OF MULTIPLICATION
LEO LR328 CD

KARAYORGIS/MANERI QUINTET
DISAMBIGUATION
LEO LR334 CD

Masashi Harada brings different characteristics to each of his three instruments: his piano playing is mostly powerful and churning, his percussion is precise, skittery and often quite delicate, his voice is that of a timorous banshee. On *Voluminous Venture*, a set of duos with double bassist Barre Phillips, he runs through his entire repertoire. Though Phillips is a strong improvisor, he's not always heard to best advantage here. It feels very much like Harada's show, and for all the music's invention, its buttonholing loquaciousness can get tiresome.

Although Harada is not a particularly elegant player, the music on *Voluminous Venture* is more gainly than The Electric Trio's on *Obliteration*. Harada may have worked for quite a few years with both Mat Maneri (electric baritone violin) and Philip Tomasic (electric guitar), but there's a bruising quality to the interplay here, as though anxieties about each other's intentions were causing them to overreact and play with exaggerated force. Amplification adds steroids to what's already a pumped up, muscular music. Mat Maneri is a highly sophisticated violinist, but that's unlikely to be the impression you'd gain from *Obliteration*. He sounds more at home on *Disambiguation*, which sounds like a broadcast from an alternative universe where Thelonious Monk is the MD. Pianist Pandelis Karayorgis and Maneri are joined by Tony Malaby on tenor, bassist Michael Formanek and drummer Randy Peterson. Whereas Karayorgis is harmonically more adventurous than Monk, his dissonances are less jarring. He's a compelling soloist and as his compositions attest, a fine tunesmith and a subtle arranger. He's recorded with Maneri before, and the results have been impressive. But *Disambiguation* is something else. In this quintet, everything works superbly.

LUV ROKAMBO
MAZE
PUBLIC EYESORE 47 CD

Slide guitar where notes are well spaced and phrases are abstractly bluesy inevitably conjures up a sun bleached landscape, blame Ry Cooder, who scored *Paris, Texas*. This evocation occurs incongruously at various points throughout *Maze*. Toru Yoneyama and Osamu Kato play toys and even conventional instruments. Whether they play any of them well is hard to determine. If you're a collector of idiosyncratic, artless, homemade music this may be for you. The recording venue is listed as Studio M, Tokyo, but the acoustics are pure bedroom. The wordless singing has a distracted quality to it, as though a complicated task (not the music, then) was being undertaken simultaneously. As John Cage intimated, pointlessness isn't always beside the point. Suffice to say, I found *Maze* utterly pointless.

WAYNE SHORTER
FOOTPRINTS LIVE!
VERVE 5896792 CD

The saxophonist's new album is his first as leader since 1994's *High Life*, his first acoustic recording since 1967 and his "first ever live recording", it says here. In fact there's plenty of Shorter live, it's just all under other leaders. Most importantly, Shorter returns to the tenor sax, which he has neglected in favour of soprano since Weather Report. He is still best known as a key member of Miles Davis's classic 60s quintet and his compositions from that era have become jazz standards. Many of those are featured here, as well as the more recent "Atlantis" and the blues "Aung San Suu Kyi", named after the Burmese opposition leader. Shorter at 68 is blowing harder than he has for years. Offering starker readings than are found on his classic recordings, his fogged, nasal tone remains totally distinctive. The playing of Panamanian pianist Danilo Perez must be exciting to watch, but here seems clinically virtuosic. Shorter's uncompromising lines perhaps need something warmer to set them off. Bassist John Patitucci is a strong if anonymous presence. Brian Blade is superb in timing and conception on drums. The result is an imperfect but valuable document of a great improvisor's Indian summer. *(Andy Hamilton)*

ERIC VON ESSEN
THE MUSIC OF ERIC VON ESSEN VOLUME III
CRYPTOGRAMOPHONE CG115 CD

The survey of music by bassist, composer Eric Von Essen has reached its third and final volume which mostly consists of ballads of various kinds. Violinist/producer Jeff Gauthier has assembled groups ranging from duos to quintets, choosing the instrumentation carefully to best bring out the qualities in his work. The cream of West Coast jazz plays on these ten tunes, each played by a different line up. Consistency is provided by the compositions themselves, which demonstrate Von Essen's fine ear for harmony and his penchant for nuanced emotional shifts. Fittingly, the bass players get to solo more often than usual and Ken Filiano and Putter Smith take the honours.

Outer Limits

Reviewed by Jim Haynes

BENEATH THE LAKE
INSIDE PASSAGE
GLASS THROAT 006 CD

Now that the smoke of sensationalist journalism has finally cleared from the heavily publicised conviction of Norwegian Black Metaller Varg Vikernes for murder and church burning, the impact of his Burzum albums, in particular *Filosofem*, both in and out of the Metal underground, can be properly measured. Black Metal's cult following emphatically adheres to the formulas of heroic blastbeat pummel and furious guitar chords, as can be heard on the first half of *Filosofem*. Meanwhile, the ghostly remnants of the 'non Metal' second half of that set rematerialise as the blueprints for countless Dark Ambient outings that have followed in its wake. Beneath The Lake are a prime example of just such a post Metal project. Consciously or otherwise, they recreate the dire masterpiece of electronic emptiness that Vikernes originally carved from the soundtrack of *Conan The Barbarian*. Here on their debut, the duo of Dave Canterbury and Nicholas Lampert drone through downtuned guitars, sustained cello, synthetic washes and processed environmental recordings to craft their ominous atmospheres. In transforming the sounds of wasps, the ocean and wolves into gaping Lustmordian moans and accompanying them with mournful, minor key guitar chords, Beneath The Lake appear to share some of Vikernes's bleak philosophies about the fallen nature of the world. Fortunately, they have devised a people-friendlier vehicle for expressing them. Cutting a record is more socially acceptable than cutting up an estranged friend, not to mention torching Norway's ancient churches.

JOE COLLEY/CRAWL UNIT
SOUND UNTIL THE WORLD ENDS
ERS ERS12/12 LP

The summer of 2001 would have been like any other for the residents of Sacramento, California, who do what they can to cope with the sweltering heat and stagnant air that sits above the city for months. Yet last year, the oppressive weather conditions were compounded by the real fear of rolling blackouts caused by an electricity and power crisis that gripped the state. From his base of operations in Sacramento, Joe Colley (who previously only recorded under his Crawl Unit moniker) documents that season's paranoid zeitgeist as a post-Industrial drone on this vinyl only release, even as he contextualises it with hyperbolically apocalyptic allusions. As on previous recordings, Colley successfully mirrors Francisco López's acclaimed manipulation of physical sound. Except where López's preferences allow for more open ended readings, Colley deliberately imbues his work with bleak metaphors. With its aptly suggestive title, *Sound Until The World Ends* dissolves the relative tranquillity of electric motors struggling to generate a sputter amid pressurised distortions and chopped white noise, before collapsing into an abyss of low frequency flutterings.

FLOOR
FLOOR
NO IDEA NIR121 CD

"I just wanted to impress a girl," confesses Floor's guitarist Anthony Vialon about forming his underground sludge/Metalcore group, whose members are scattered across Central Florida. A like sincerity courses the veins of Floor's super-heavy, detuned guitar music. When they're grinding out half-speed, crushing distortion on their floppy E strings over chunky backbeats, Flood can equal the intensity of sludgecore specialists like fellow Florida masters of heaviosity, Cavity, and the Japanese group Boris. When they succumb to Vialon's desire to serenade a girl, however, their strained vocalese and bittersweet sentiments recast them as American emocore adolescents, prompting the question, if he's singing for his girl, how come we're listening and not her?

JANITOR
RECEIVING A FLOWER ON MOTHER'S DAY
TESCO TESCO051 CD

After several well received Hazard albums released by Ash International, BJ Nilsen returns to the death rattles that spawned his earlier recordings as Morthound for Cold Meat Industries. In Janitor, Nilsen submits the power of his wintry drones to the militant authority of his collaborator Lina Baby Doll. In contrast to the sorrowful grandeur that characterises most of Cold Meat Industry's graduates, Janitor offer a funhouse take on Gothic. Ordinarily, ventilated mechanisations, ashen atmospheres, clanging blacksmithery and Teutonic monochords would make for a grim affair. But they live up to their redeeming self-description "bubblegum Industrial" in a silly bastardisation of Nico's "All That Is My Own" and another singsong dirge, "Lacerate Your Mother's Neighbor". Janitor are as serious as B movie horror, and just as enjoyable.

MURMER
.MURMER
BAKE 057 CD-R

Arriving in London a few years ago, American born Patrick McGinley began documenting the banal ambience of his immediate surrounds, be it his apartment or anonymous forms of mass transit. Wind, refrigerator hum, malfunctioning gas heaters, an air vent on the 73 bus, modem data streams and a tube station escalator make up the base material of his effective lowercase debut as Murmer. Working a simple set-up of four track recorder and delay pedals, he transforms these raw recordings into glowing compositions of delicately phasing drones. *.murmer* is his introspective reconstruction of the novelty of his big city experience.

OMIT
REJECTOR
SYSECULAR SYS 000 CD-R

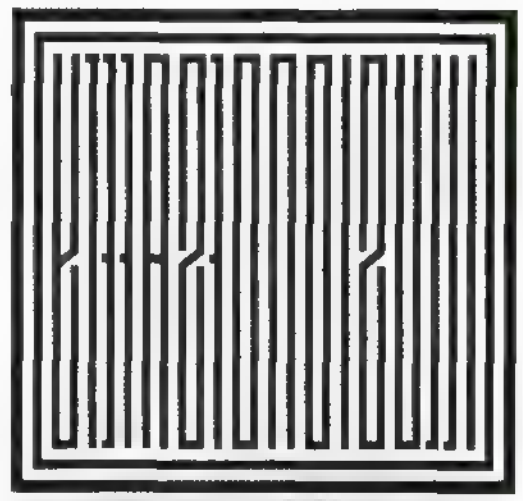
In keeping with his hermetic existence in Blenheim, New Zealand, Clint Williams aka Omit usually accompanies his handwritten correspondences and home-dubbed catalogue of cassette-only releases with xeroxed drawings of dismembered eyeballs and sluggish monsters posed on barren Dalí like wastelands. Appearing as an unmediated continuation of the nerdy doodlings in the margins of his school books, these visions of the surreal exhibit an uncomfortable charm, especially when set next to his more sophisticated, but equally lo tech sound constructions. Sadly, no such drawings ornament his *Rejector* CD-R, but it's still a fantastic collection. Patterned after the paranoid electronics of Klaus Schulze's *Cyborg*, Omit tinkers with outdated synthesizers, delay pedals and tape loops to shape plastic signal patterns and oblique modulations to evoke sprawling voids of nightmarish emptiness. Sublime wooden rhythms and unsettling, textured scrapes sporadically appear in the synthetic wash, suggesting that Williams has encountered the higher profile electronica of Alva Noto. Such parallels are purely coincidental, but Omit deserves a broader audience.

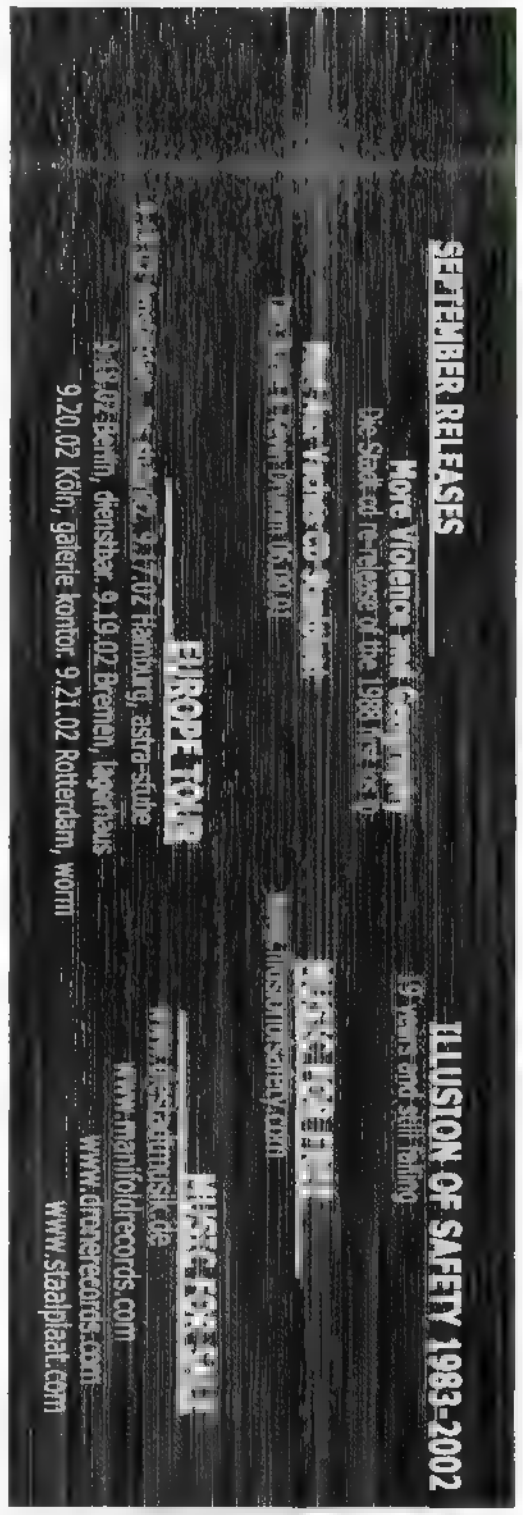
RAMLEH
TOO MANY MILES
DIRTER PROMOTIONS DPROM48 CD

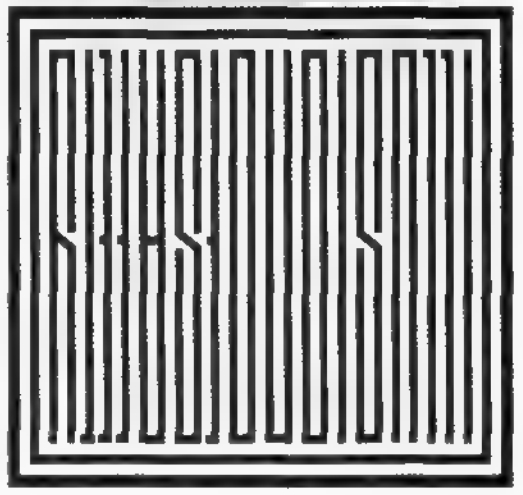
The group ceased to exist in 1997, but throughout the 80s and early 90s Ramleh and their close neighbours Skullflower (whose members regularly played on each other's albums) armed themselves with a volatile arsenal of noise rock and confrontational strategies held over from their earlier Power Electronics incarnations. As exemplified on this collection of singles, Ramleh never wavered from an incredibly simple template made up of a slow, yet unrelenting rhythm section, indecipherable megaphone vocals, huge swells of curling guitar feedback and gritty wah-wah distortion. Their sound was a seething cauldron of Savage Republic, Godflesh and Nirvana (whose Kurt Cobain was the subject of Ramleh's single "Night Hair Child"), but it coalesced into something nastier, more abrasive and chaotic. Ramleh manifest the pathos of the last angry man, so drunk and narcotised that their words splutter out illegibly. Their volatile cocktail of rage, misanthropy and self-destructive abjection should be approached with caution.

THUUNDERBOY!
THUUNDERBOY!
TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS TOE76 CD

Produced by Tony Conrad, *Thuunderboy!* documents his two year old son Ted's 1973 experiments with a turntable and a bunch of 45s. The kid's appetite for destruction proves insatiable, as he tortures captivating squeals from the likes of Donny Osmond with his heavy needle abuse. Two year olds don't need to be told how to scratch up some naggingly effective locked grooves – and Ted's efforts anticipate Industrial culture's desire to provoke murderous rage in listeners. Whether you read this as the vanity project of a proud father convinced of his son's prodigy, or as a fun demonstration of how to sabotage the music industry's attempts to capture customers young, it's Tony and Ted's gift to the children of the world. *(Biba Kopf)*





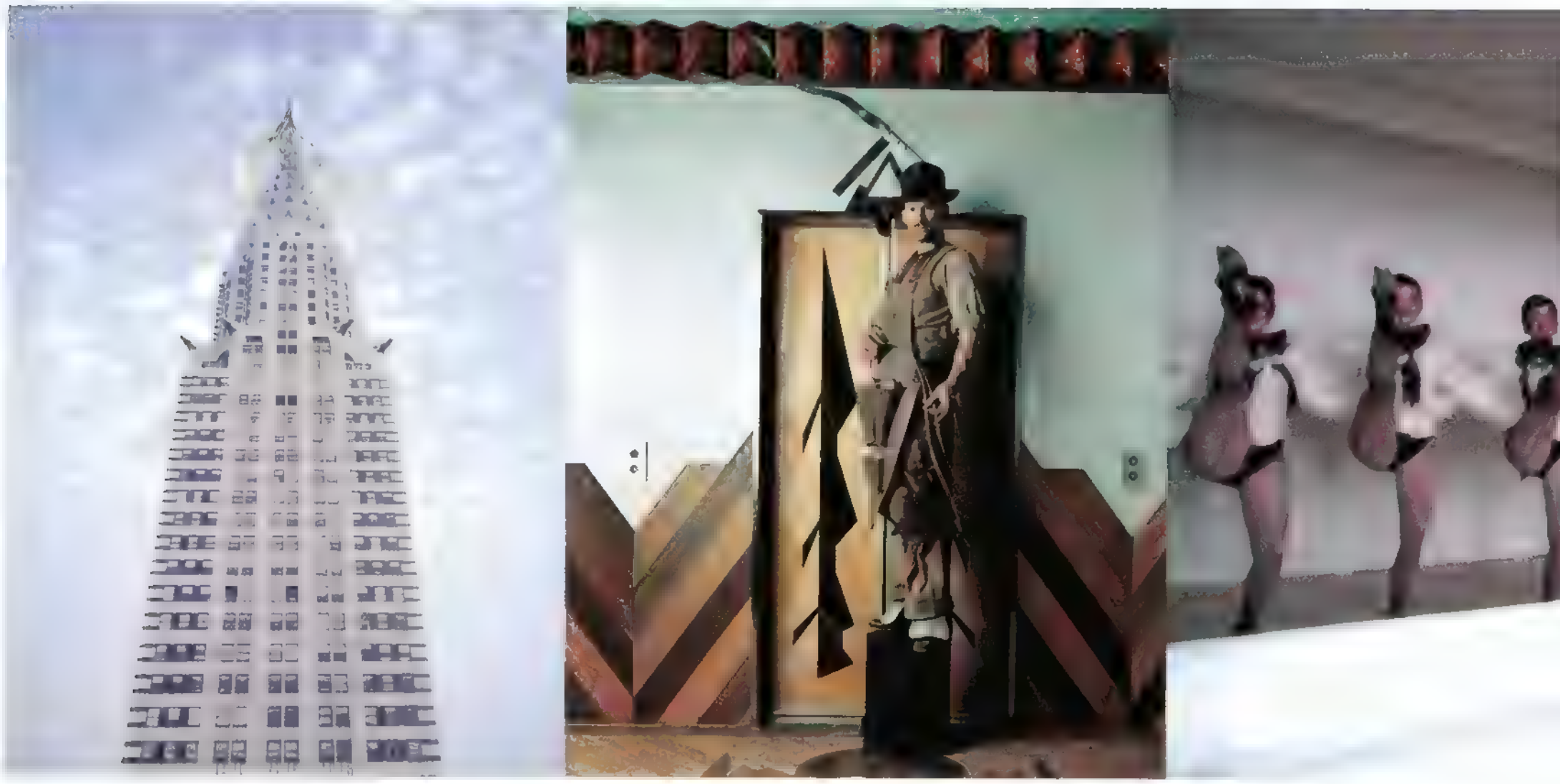


Cross Platform

Sound in other media.

This month Philip Sherburne meets Jonathan Bepler, the man charged with the task of soundtracking Matthew Barney's epic *Cremaster* film cycle, which contains some of the most challenging and arresting images of American art cinema

Weird scenes inside the Chrysler Building: stills from Matthew Barney's *Cremaster 3* (2002)



You can't see New York's iconic Chrysler Building from Jonathan Bepler's home studio, set amid vacant lots and squat apartment blocks on a quiet street in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. But the two buildings are linked nonetheless. It's here that Bepler composed the soundtrack to Matthew Barney's latest arthouse epic, *Cremaster 3* – a movie mythologising the Art Deco tower. It's not your average office comedy – like all of Barney's work, the feature-length film could hardly be confused with even the most outré of Hollywood product. Apart from detours to the Guggenheim Museum, Giant's Causeway in Northern Ireland and Fingal's Cave on Staffa, an island in the Scottish Hebrides, Masonic intrigue, dental torture and elegant scenes of automotive carnage are all encapsulated within the upward thrust of the Chrysler spire. Phallic? Just a little, but after all, Barney – former model, reluctant artworld bad boy, and toast of gossip columnists as Bjork's boyfriend – chose to name the film after the muscle that controls testicular response. The audacious scale of Barney's films – a surreal cinematic cycle that's cost millions of dollars so far, and built its own cottage industry of limited edition prints and sculptures – often leads critics to lump him in with headline-grabbers like Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst, but there's no denying the grandiosity of his vision. His cryptic narratives spin together creation myths, Freemasonry and gaudy pop culture references only to blow them up to the rich, supersaturated scale of photographer Andreas Gursky... on IMAX.

The *Cremaster* cycle, filmed out of order (*4, 1, 5, 2, 3*), addresses the theme of artistic creation and destruction from various incompatible perspectives: *Cremaster 5* recreated a late 19th century opera, whereas *Cremaster 2* tackled the executed killer Gary Gilmore. In that film, Bepler's score offers dissonant organ tone clusters, ballads drawn from Gilmore's own writing and an apocalyptic face-off between Slayer drummer Dave Lombardo and 200,000 honey bees. The latest, *Cremaster 3*, runs for three dialogue-free hours and is propelled largely by Bepler's labyrinthine soundtrack. A third of the film takes place inside Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum, where a pink-clad Highlander (played by Barney himself) scales the walls to the tune of a drunken electro jig. As he climbs, he encounters the precision dance troupe The Rockettes cavorting in sheep costumes, hardcore punk bands Murphys Law and Agnostic Front squared off in a soundclash, and the ravishing athlete, model and double amputee Aimee Mullins towering on two stiletto-tipped, Plexiglass legs. The score unfolds as unpredictably as the film's visuals, touching on planar string sequences, Gaelic ballads, note-perfect renderings of big band jazz and a theremin fugue so intense it could strain even Ryoji Ikeda's ears.

Introduced to the film maker through his director of photography, Peter Strietman, Jonathan Bepler first collaborated with Barney on 1995's *Cremaster 1*, arranging show tunes and composing Muzak-style incidental music. The soundtrack was a first for Bepler, a trained composer and multi-instrumentalist known for improv performances with the likes of Zeena Parkins and Ikue Mori. But his background in dance, installation and free music ensembles prepared him for Barney's non-traditional approach, and on the next one in the cycle, *Cremaster 5*, Bepler's contribution took a much more dominant role. "I always thought of that as an opera, as a self-contained piece of music," he says. The music was written before anything was shot, developed only in relation to abstract concepts and narratives. "I got to avoid this idea of, 'Here's an image; what's the perfect sound?' That's what I like about collaborating with Matthew – my work is integrated early, so I don't have to have what I call this pornographic moment, where you have an image and are selfconsciously adding the sound to create an effect for the viewer," an approach he describes as "manipulative".

Unusual among directors and composers, Barney and Bepler often work in tandem. "We start talking about sounds before the film is even ready to be shot," says Bepler. "Matthew often has basic concepts and narratives that he's already thinking about, but it's often unknown what form they'll really take. Then I

PHOTOS: CHRIS WINGFIELD COURTESY BARBARA GLADSTONE

immediately start working on little sketches, and my own ideas, my own resonances for those concepts and narrative ideas. Because they're pretty abstract and open in the beginning, there's a lot of room for me to interpret and develop. I think he allows the music to change, or to influence his thought, and I certainly allow the new material he brings to influence mine".

At times the sound even drives the narrative. In *Cremaster 3*, an outsized piano wire is strung up the elevator shaft; a maître d' in the penthouse lobby alternately strums the impromptu harp and heaves the elevator doors open and closed, 'playing' the rushing wind. "We talked about wanting the Chrysler Building, because it is a kind of organism... to have a voice," Bepler says. "Matthew knew he wanted to deal with the elevator shaft, so we talked about how the wind in the shaft and the elevator cables could make sound in response to, and as part of, the action. The music was then created as a kind of expression of the building itself." Elsewhere, beer kegs become bagpipes, and towel racks turn out to be theremins.

Given that *Cremaster 5* largely concerns itself with icons and symbols, the score indulges in its own iconographic play – something Bepler calls "problematic". "I've always hated quotations and jokes in music. It feels insincere to me," he says. Instead of simply quoting – much less sampling, something he never does – he tries to reference recognisable styles in his own voice. "My hope is that if I approach a swing band, I've learned a lot about it somehow, and found what I like about it, and then what comes out the other end is equal parts me, and its history." He even considered writing the parts for Murphys Law and Agnostic Front, but in the end they played their own songs. Bepler, though, had them extend the intros, turning the classic hardcore motif into a bizarre musical fetish object. "The question," he says, "is how to use these elements but have them be really sincere."

Sincerity – or the lack of it – has been a sticking point for critics unable to see beyond the films' sprawl. In their eyes, says Bepler, the cycle "implies bigness and success, and a financial excess. I can certainly understand feeling an aversion to that. Also, and I don't know if it's the right word, there is something a little shameless in the music and the projects in general. In a lot of ways there's nothing subtle about some of the work. But I feel that you have to go for it and not try to hold it back in some ironic way, which I think is what a lot of people would do."

"There's something about irony, for me, which I don't accept," he continues. "I think it's worth it to make a big gesture even if it almost seems obscene. As long as it's sincere. I understand how people could find it a little excessive," he concedes. "I would just say that we're aware that there are parts that are not subtle, but if something wants to get big, then just let it get big. That's sort of the only choice. I think some of the work is quite aggressive and it's not holding back from that. And it's sometimes sentimental, and not holding back from that either. But I believe that that kind of sincerity and directness is a valuable thing."

Of course, after 11 September, there was plenty of railing against irony, but somehow the stakes seem higher for *Cremaster 3*, whose towering, teetering skyscraper figures so prominently – and which was itself in production when the World Trade Centre collapsed.

"As a contemporary artist, I feel that there's a responsibility to try to subvert the kinds of excessive bullshit you see people accepting all the time that feels empty," acknowledges the composer, but he tries to resist working in a purely "negative" capacity. "Matthew's got such an involved construction and system of his own that I think it's almost entirely positive. Sometimes we talk about how things are going to be taken by an audience, but generally the idea is we can't worry about that too much. People often misunderstand it because there's some money and success around it. People believe he's trying to create that, and I really think not. I think he's just totally devoted to the system he has, and that is really the most important thing." *Jonathan Bepler's soundtracks for* Cremaster 2, 3 *and* 5 *are available on CD from his Website: www.jonathanbepler.com*

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Stills from *The Final Academy* and SFT's *Swift* DVDs

THE FINAL ACADEMY DOCUMENTS

CHERRY RED FILMS CRDVD013 DVD

BY KEN HOLLINGS

Back in 1982, William S Burroughs swept briefly through Britain like an outbreak of typhoid in a spoken word tour organised by Genesis P Orridge. His task was to present material from his recently completed novel, *The Place Of Dead Roads*. Unlike the rest of Europe, where similar outbreaks had become a regular occurrence on the festival circuit, special conditions apparently had to be imposed in order to protect the UK from his contagious presence.

The Final Academy was a cautious attempt to prepare audiences to deal specifically with the possibility of a serious Burroughs infection. Groups like Cabaret Voltaire, Psychic TV and 23 Skidoo were booked to appear. Anthony Balch's footage documenting a major Burroughs outbreak in London during the early 1960s was screened. However, it was Ikon, the video production wing of Manchester's legendary Factory Records, which ultimately managed to contain the epidemic, carefully documenting Burroughs in the process of contaminating the Hacienda's still relatively fresh and uncontaminated halls.

The result was released two years later as a handsomely slipcased box set. One tape contained *Towers Open Fire*, Balch's outstanding short movie, inspired by and starring Burroughs himself, plus *Ghosts At Number 9*, an extended assemblage of archive material edited together by Psychic TV. The second offered highlights of Burroughs and John Giorno performing live.

Now reissued as a DVD by Cherry Red in the cheapest-looking format possible, it's hard to see what all the fuss was about. From the poorly scanned image on the cover to the dire reproduction quality of both the 1960s Balch footage and the Hacienda performance itself, this is just about the sorriest product to come into existence. An accompanying note boasts of having 'carefully restored' the material, presumably meaning in this case that the microphone hum running all the way through Burroughs's reading has now been made more plainly audible, while the picture itself looks as if it's been filtered through an old sock. There are no extra features. Bryon Gysin's only appearance is in *Ghosts At Number 9*, and John Giorno's attempts to elevate the sound of a grown man hectoring and whining incessantly to the level of an art form have not withstood the test of time. Possibly the only 'highlight' from Ikon's original release that's worth checking out is the sight of Burroughs, outrider of the apocalypse and literary legend, waiting patiently, but with ill concealed disbelief, for his audience to shut up long enough for him to start his presentation. They don't. This release is for them.

SFT
SWIFT

MUTE STUMM197 CD/DVD

BY KEN HOLLINGS

In line with the compression of his name down to three simple letters (which are reconfigured into its title), Simon Fisher Turner's latest release presents conceptual complexity artfully masquerading as elegant minimalism. The initial premise may seem simple enough, but the possibilities that it offers are endless and the implications enormous. Subtitled "Twenty Pieces Of Music, Film And Silence", *Swift* comprises two discs (handily colour coded) containing identical sequences of compositions. As a pure audio experience, the CD version extends both charm and sensitivity to the mood and detail of SFT's 1999 release, *Oh Venus*. Working once again with Israeli musician Gilad Atzmon on woodwind and brass, Turner laces together electronics, World rhythms, chamber music, found moments and fleeting asides into delicate yet sturdy assemblages.

It is only when set against the collaged footage that makes up *A Film* by Alan Shepherd on the DVD that these pieces take on their full significance. Accessible either individually or in carefully sequenced order, each combination of music and imagery takes on a gently transmutable existence of its own. A sun-drenched French harvest scene is run sedately backwards over dreamy guitar loops and high pitched vocal repetitions on "Fascka"; street scenes from Fez and Marrakech, set against urgent rhythmic patterning of "S Bahn", have the rich glow of old hand retouched postcards; a crowd watching the 1999 total eclipse of the sun is accompanied by the lazy cockeyed swirling of a saloon bar piano and a blurred monologue.

SFT already has an impressive reputation as a creator of movie soundtracks, having recently supplied material for Lodge Kerrigan's bleakly claustrophobic *Claire Dolan* and a BFI revival of Jean Genet's *Un Chant D'Amour*. It's the Super 8 work of Derek Jarman, the film maker with whom Turner is most closely associated (he contributed to the soundtracks for *Caravaggio*, *The Last Of England*, *The Garden*, *Edward II* and *Blue*) that resonates most strongly here. Flickering with dispassionate intimacy and suspended momentum, this personal vision transformed into intimate journal. Sound and vision run in parallel, rarely meeting but continually informing each other, evoking the sumptuous melancholy of the world. A haircut run in slow motion on "Deum De Deo" becomes an act of baptism. The brooding handheld night explorations of "Microgroovers" suggest either a private party or a mass suicide. Drawing upon imagery, performances and sampled life gathered from around the world, *Swift* reveals an entire universe quietly reassembling itself from diverse locations in time and space. Be there when it happens.

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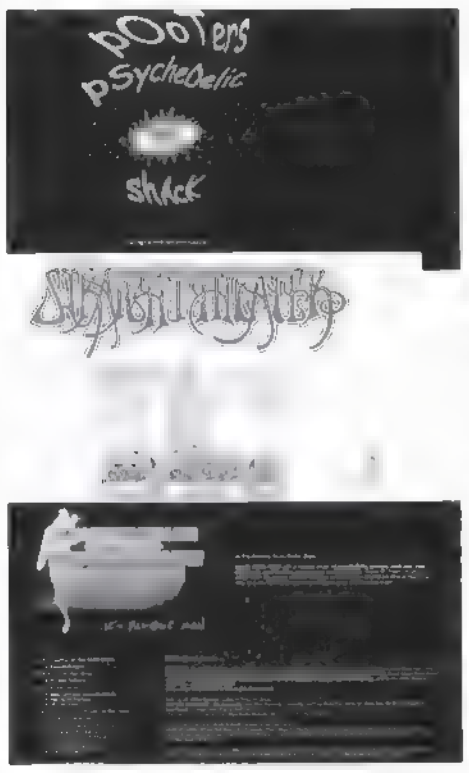

Did you know 10cc is the average amount of sperm in the male ejaculation, or that the 'Beastie' in Beastie Boys is an is an acronym for Boys Entering Anarchistic States Toward Internal Excellence? If not, then the aptly titled site **How Bands Got Their Names** (www.popnuvo.com/live/replace_namesa_c.html) has been created as a helping hand. There are many theories about the name Grateful Dead but even the most ardent Deadhead in the office hadn't heard that it refers to "a series of old English folk tales with the same basic theme. A traveler enters a village and finds the villagers desecrating or refusing to bury the body of a dead man because he died owing creditors money. The traveler pays the dead man's debts and sees to a decent burial. Later in his travels the man is saved by a mysterious event, which is credited to the dead man's grateful spirit. Hence, the Grateful Dead." Bookmark this site and look forward to a more enlightened existence.

"A dark corner of the void dedicated to Psychedelia, Acid Rock, Progressive Rock, Garage Bands, 60s Punk, Krautrock, Freakbeat, wig-lifting rarities, books, posters, lightshows and other STRANGE items related to pSycheDelic music" is the snappy strapline for **Pooter's Psychedelic Shack aka The Heaven Accident** (www.pooterland.com). Chock full of psychobabble, they have gems like "Claim your free CD-R compilation" amongst the more conventional discographies/links/mailing list structure. The Band List is impressive but sadly didn't withstand the 'Kippington Lodge' test – searching for the group (a later incarnation of Kaleidoscope, who are listed) came up as blank as did beloved Japanese cult act The Mops. **The Straight On The Haight** (www.thestraight.com) is a site dedicated to the legendary multimedia light theatre located in San Francisco's Haight district between 1966-69, where groups like Grateful Dead, Janis Joplin, Big Brother And The Holding Company and Santana searched for the Aquarian Age in front of an audience. Apart from a photogallery, poster gallery and stories and articles related the theatre, the site includes audio clips of live performances which took place there.

The Wild Bohemian Home Page (www.wildbohemian.com) is a links resource for everything hippy related. This seven year old site (maintained by a self proclaimed "old hippy") also contains plenty of material. Get the lowdown on the Beats, The Dead (obviously), outlaw bikers, a massive dictionary explaining terms like "laid back" and "spaced out" (in case you've been asleep for the past 30 years). There are sections on altered consciousness, a who's who and Ken Kesey analysis in abundance. **Sixties** (www.sixties.com) is a similar site with less content, but worth it for the photos of Jimi Hendrix and The Doors by Gene Anthony. For a fuller view of his archive check out his **Sixties Photos Archive** (www.sixtiesphotos.com). **Plastic Tales From The Marshmallow Dimension** (www.wnyc.org/plastictales) is the excellent specialist radio programme hosted by the phenomenal **WNUY** (www.wnyc.org). It houses a colossal Real Audio archive stuffed with psychedelia from all eras and areas including interviews and guest DJ shows. Check out *The Wire*'s own Mike Barnes doing a special Captain Beefheart show from back in the day when men were real men and rhythms were Fast 'N' Bulbous. And for those who are growing their ponytail and want to go even further, the links section has hundreds of related psych sites to pass the time. Real gone.

ANNE HILDE NESET

Print Run

New music books: devoured, dissected, dissed

Trippers and travellers The Grateful Dead, clarinettist Perry Robinson

A LONG STRANGE TRIP: THE INSIDE HISTORY OF THE GRATEFUL DEAD

DENNIS MCNALLY

BANTAM PRESS HBK £20

BY DAVID KEENAN

In 1965 when Bob Dylan first synthesized rock and folk via the ghost of electricity, The Grateful Dead were still trading as The Warlocks, a boogie blues group with a repertoire of Country folk standards and jug band stompers. Scarcely three years later they were knee deep in the "thick air" of 1968's *Anthem Of The Sun*, a huge concrète construction that drew on bassist Phil Lesh's background as an apprentice of composer Luciano Berio, the group's obsession with the interstellar improvisations of John Coltrane and a full spectrum of American roots music. Yet, even after reading Dennis McNally's near definitive inside history of The Dead, inevitably called *A Long Strange Trip*, the giant steps that got them from A to B are not immediately explicable.

Of course, LSD played a large part in opening up their neural pathways to the possibility of such intuitive generic leaps. Despite all the theoretical baggage they had accrued, The Dead's music still feels like it had evolved organically and unconsciously. Their elastic approach to structure springs from a simple refusal: the song might be over, but the group haven't finished playing. Serendipity is the password to The Dead's trip, and McNally convincingly portrays them as the unwitting cultural avatars of America's postwar bohemia.

Indeed, *A Long Strange Trip* is effectively the second volume in McNally's chronicle of the 20th century's counterculture. The first was *Desolate Angel*, his 1979 study of writer Jack Kerouac, passing the Beat baton to The Grateful Dead makes sense. For one, key characters from *Desolate Angel* resurface in *A Long Strange Trip*, most notably the hoodlum saint Neal Cassady, whom Kerouac beatified as Dean Moriarty in *On The Road*, and the poets Allen Ginsberg and Michael McClure. But McNally's quest for the roots of American counterculture goes beyond Beat and deeper into the past in order to link the hippy experiment to a current of American utopianism stretching back to Henry Thoreau and Walt Whitman. Opposing the revisionist line that nails down the 1960s counterculture as a one off attempt at creating a new moral code, McNally sees it as a contemporary manifestation of the ongoing American utopian desire to establish a much older set of values.

In the wake of the mid-60s Acid Tests, where The Dead teamed up with Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters to create a synaesthetic setting for the exploration of inner space, many of its pioneers unconsciously set about reifying a panoply of historical archetypes disinterred from folk memory. McNally details Dead contemporaries like Quicksilver Messenger Service, who modelled themselves after Western frontiersmen, and The Charlatans, who dressed as Victorian gents. And as The Dead progressed, they also took regular peeks over their shoulder. Their two 1970 albums, *Workingman's Dead* and *American Beauty*, saw them cut back on the interstellar static of their heavily amplified trips to the outer reaches of "Dark Star", for a cycle of acoustically driven songs that drew more heavily on American roots and folk traditions. Even so, Dead concerts were still highly eclectic.

As The Grateful Dead's head of publicity since 1984, McNally has enjoyed unprecedented access to the group and their extended family over the years. His history is appropriately strong on detail, sketching intimate studies that bring you up close to its various protagonists without intruding on their core privacy. But his relationship to the group doesn't mean he's about to airbrush their character flaws out of the picture. Structurally, his book interleaves its straightforwardly chronological narrative with impressionistic eyewitness snapshots from on the road and behind the scenes. While his gig reportage throws up plenty of mouthwatering detail, it's his snapshots from backstage that are the most eye-peeling. The Dead organisation might take pride in its avowed anti-hierarchical structure, but that doesn't mean it's not riddled with cliques and petty territorial disputes. His snapshots of everyday bickering among Dead employees leave the feeling that the various members of The Dead have been so long cocooned within the stoned environs of the Dead mothership that their social skills have been entirely blunted, leaving them either unwilling or unable to confront the little behind the scenes tyrannies within the organisation. What's more, the air is so thick with sweaty testosterone that there's not much room for women, wives or girlfriends. McNally is acutely aware of just how artificial the touring set-up is, and doesn't shy away from showing The Dead warts and all. More valuably, when he tackles events that have already been written about at length, he delivers enough new details or insights to make you see them afresh. Parading a staggering roll call of witnesses, he throws up plenty of new angles about the notorious Altamont free concert, where a black youth was killed by Hell's Angels. It was The Dead who suggested that The Rolling Stones use the Angels as security. Yet when they saw the violence, they got out fast without playing. Not The Dead's finest hour.

McNally's commentaries on The Dead's various recordings are not always as illuminating, but his judgment calls are routinely on the money and he consistently reveals little details that'll send you scurrying back to the source. Despite The Dead's involvement with countless causes and concerns, from Emmett Grogan's revolutionary prankster activists The Diggers through their concert attempts at mass ESP, they were essentially apolitical, claiming that they were just a rock 'n' roll dance band. Well, they got that much right. Truly, the music never stopped, and McNally's book more than succeeds in hammering the point home.

PHOTO: ROBINSON: VAN WIMMER

CAN'T BE SATISFIED: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MUDDY WATERS

ROBERT GORDON

JONATHAN CAPE HBK £18 99

BY BEN WATSON

Born in Issaquena, Mississippi in 1913 and dying in Chicago in 1983 Muddy Waters – real name McKinley Morganfield – was the bluesman who took the blues into the rock era He pioneered the combination of drums electric bass, guitar piano and amplified vocal which is still the reference point for most popular music The sides he recorded for Chess between 1948 and the late 50s are devastating. Waters's slide guitar sounding like an unmediated reflex to the thrilling power of electricity Starting with The Rolling Stones and Captain Beefheart, rock culture overdosed on this sound, and it's understandable if later generations groan when you mention the blues However, it's arguable that any electronic or digital art that ignores Waters's epochal fusion of lust and technology will sound trivial and ungrounded When Charles Shaar Murray began pushing punk groups in the pages of *New Musical Express*, it was because Dr Feelgood, The Sex Pistols and The Clash had reconnected to the primal thud disdained by Mike Oldfield and Pink Floyd Chuck D was first turned around by *Electric Mud* from 1968. Marshall Chess's attempt to update Waters's sound by swamping it in Pete Cosey's psychedelic guitar but he quickly checked out Waters's classic recordings Public Enemy achieved the heaviest, noisiest sound blast in HipHop because they took on board Waters's raw downhome stomp His twang is there in Masayuki Takayanagi, James Ulmer and Stefan Jaworzyn, and lacking in any number of fluff-feedback pretenders. About time a Muddy Waters biography appeared

Author of books about the Memphis scene and Elvis, Robert Gordon began work on this biography 15 years after Waters's death He has mastered a massive amount of material the bibliography lists 89 books and 163 interviews and articles He obtained seven lengthy Muddy Waters interview tapes from conscientious inquisitors Murray, Peter Guralnick and Pete Welding, and carried out 80 interviews with Waters's contemporaries himself He dissects every released and unreleased recording describes every group line up and tour His account of Waters's extravagant sexual liaisons and progeny is unblinking but never prurient, balancing contrary judgments from wives, mistresses, musicians and offspring. Gordon's work in the Fisk University archives resulted in the discovery of the long lost study of folk music in Coahoma County by Alan Lomax and John Work, whose ethnological field trips resulted in Waters's first recordings when he was a sharecropper on Stovall's Plantation (this latter study may soon be published in its own right)

The blues isn't easy to write about As the music of illiterate Southern blacks (Waters could only write his own name with difficulty, and could barely read), it has such overwhelming emotional power that the dangers of false appropriation, patronism, projection and over interpretation lurk at every corner The Muddy Waters Band were known as The Drunken Band, and their blues arrived sozzled in half pints of homemade bourbon Their performances were explicitly sexual with Waters invoking demons derived from African religions and folklore. When he sprayed a soda siphon from his fly at the climax of "I'm A Man", it wasn't as silly as it sounds With jazz a writer can discuss music theory, politics and philosophy knowing he's talking the language of at least some of the musicians in the blues scene, literary values are automatically suspect, an invasion by a different principle

Robert Gordon negotiates these problems by employing the hip, anti establishment persona familiar from *Rolling Stone* writers of the 70s His grammar nods towards that of his subjects – "they reworked the stop time rhythm It fit"; "the instrument really shined" – but avoids the worst 'wannabe blackisms' of Jack Kerouac His purple passages work best when naming his own responses to the records He says of Little Walter's storming harmonica "His notes float like crimson leaves that skip in the wind His evocations of ghetto life are particularly vivid: "Vagrant men hawk still-sealed porno tapes from plastic grocery sacks" He's less convincing, though, when turning his documentary materials into novelistic drama He tries to describe Waters's facial expression as he's photographed with Big Bill Broonzy's hand on his shoulder, but his projection feels forced and unlikely

It is a pity that a fascinating passage in a letter by Alan Lomax a paean to the democracy of recorded oral history versus the one way top down communication of Hollywood and TV, is banished to a footnote. In common with Guralnick and Murray, Gordon is seduced by the notion that stars like Eric Clapton and Bonnie Raitt are Waters's true inheritors the paradox of the success of the blues in a bitterly unfair society is never quite confronted The picture that emerges therefore has a somewhat romantic and quarantined air, as unavailable to today's practitioners as a sepia photograph in a wooden frame When you read Nick Tosches on blues and Country artists, you can imagine 'industry failures' like The Cramps or The Fall or Swamp Dogg having a place in the story The links established between blues and outlaw musics like punk, Improv and free jazz by the Revenant label make sense. Gordon is hip enough to digest a mountain of material into a fine read (he also provides us with a host of rare photographs), but not quite hip enough to jolt Waters out of mere greatness into a dialogue with the present However, *Can't Be Satisfied* does combine unstinting and heartfelt passion for Waters's music with scrupulous attention to documented fact, and for that we can be grateful

PERRY ROBINSON: THE TRAVELER

PERRY ROBINSON & FLORENCE WETZEL

IUNIVERSE PBK £19 99

BY PHILIP CLARK

Perry Robinson is arguably the only jazz clarinettist in the generation that followed Jimmy Giuffre and Tony Scott who has actually blown something fresh through the instrument For most mainstream jazz fans, he will be forever associated with the first of Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra recordings, Archie Shepp's *Mama Too Tight* and Dave Brubeck's splashy 1970s jazz rock outfit Two Generations Of Brubeck Nevertheless, he has also worked with Peter Brotzmann Gunter Hampel and William Parker, and can be found on CDs by Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan and George Clinton It's barely credible, unfair even, that someone could boost this roster of playing experience while remaining such a shadowy figure Exploring this apparent dichotomy, *The Traveler* is the story of a true maverick spirit who has lived the jazz lifestyle because he's known no other way

In her introduction, co author Florence Wetzel suggests the most obvious reason for Robinson's neglect came with his decision to devote himself to the clarinet Jazz was gripped by the mythology of the saxophone, and the clarinet looked like a relic of the days when Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw were having hit records Robinson's determination to follow his chosen route gives an early indication of his resolute personality He describes how he sold the saxophones he had bought to help him find extra gigs because their presence in his life smacked of compromise, and how he "thought big" at bebop jam sessions so his clarinet could punch above its weight "It's really a mental procedure," he writes "You imagine your head getting swelled and you see yourself projecting a direct column of air like a laser"

Robinson's father was the composer Earl Robinson, and throughout the book Earl's influence both as a musician and a nonconformist thinker is a recurring theme. Earl Robinson was a communist whose political sympathies got him into trouble during the McCarthy area His circle of friends included Pete Seeger and Leadbelly, and Perry became especially close to Woody Guthrie Guthrie apparently recognised Perry's potential, and the text includes some touching correspondence in which he encourages his young charge to find his creative self. However Robinson was equally likely to arrive home at night to find that Leonard Bernstein was coming for dinner, and this rich mixture of 'straight' and folk influences had a direct impact on his exploration of the clarinet. One of his formative influences was the eccentric Dixie and clarinettist Pee Wee Russell, whose odd rhythmic lines and joyful use of 'illegal' melodic intervals predated Thelonious Monk. But Robinson shows equal respect for the more 'legitimate' approach of Benny Goodman and even for the great British orchestral clarinettist Reginald Kell. Robinson describes in great detail how Kell's approach to vibrato revolutionised the sound of the clarinet in Britain during the 1940s and 50s, and how he incorporated Kell's ideas into his own sound

Robinson's description of his progress through the American jazz scene of the late 50s and 60s has a *Zelig* quality. He jams at Minton's Playhouse and is at the third of the legendary Lenox School of Jazz courses, where he first encounters Ornette Coleman He meets Albert Ayler in Spain, just as Ayler is about to travel to Copenhagen to make his debut recordings Robinson might well have the unerring habit of being at the right place at the right time, but luck rarely shines on him enough to turn these chance encounters into the historically important events they could have been Thus we have no recorded encounters of Robinson with Coleman or Ayler, nor of his own groups of the time, the Un Trio and the New Blues Quartet In both of these groups, he was experimenting with loosely floating structures based on blues forms and recordings might well have established him as a more important figure Another chance is lost when the tapes of a widely remembered session with bassist Steve Tintweiss and drummer Sunny Murray disappear in a pawnshop And typically even when Robinson does make it into the studio to record his superb *Funk Dumpling*, the producer and owner of Savoy records swindles him out of his royalties.

Robinson's ability to bounce back from these misfortunes is inspiring He plays music for the sake of playing music, and he has little concern for his place in history. He is very candid about the influence of drugs on his most 'out' moments, and whether it's with Dave Brubeck or William Parker, he's only going to play with those who are open enough to embrace his eclectic language *The Traveler* is a vivid document, and a rewarding read

Trite-lipped in digitopia Billie Holiday

DIGITOPIA BLUES: RACE, TECHNOLOGY, AND THE AMERICAN VOICE

JOHN SOBOL

THE BANFF CENTRE PRESS PBK $17.95

BY TOM PERCHARD

Delivered almost like a folk tale, here is a narrative about the African-American oral tradition of music and poetry, and the ways in which that tradition strives to protect its identity in a 'literate' culture. John Sobol is a white Canadian poet and musician born into such a culture, but is nevertheless intent on recovering for his own art a measure of what he sees as the momentary freedom, communality and corporeality of the black creative tradition. *Digitopia Blues* forms part of that exploration. Sobol examines moments at which artists have made pen and voice meet, and looks towards a digital future that he predicts will have a lasting impact on literate culture's notions of authorship, transmission and transience.

In the first half of his short book, he skips through a history of African American performance practices, establishing what he perceives as the essential orality of African American music. "Oral values stand in opposition to literate values," he writes. "Orality favours process over product, spoken over written words, improvisation over reproduction." Although he doesn't quite articulate it, Sobol reads the struggle between "playful" orality and "efficient" literacy (and their associated value systems) as one facet of the Western oppression of black people. An oral culture's protection and relaying of that which must remain unarticulated, or else its subversion of the authorised, is hinted at by his discussion of the increasingly trite lyrics that Billie Holiday's producers required her to sing, and the compensatory interpretive magic that she worked on those words.

The conflict between white Protestant American and African American values, played out in music, has been addressed elsewhere and in far greater depth by Angela Davis. Indeed, many of the book's themes have been covered in more 'literate' fashion by writers like Henry Louis Gates Jr, George Lipsitz, Geneva Smitherman and Amiri Baraka. Ben Sidran's 1971 *Black Talk*, one of the first books to explore the orality/literacy divide in terms of black culture, has also informed some of Sobol's thought. But this is a defiantly oral narrative (its written form notwithstanding), and in aiming for a certain linearity of argument, the author inevitably sacrifices a degree of detail and dialectical clarity. The binary opposition of the oral and the literate deserves to be questioned, but Sobol's informal narrative is ill equipped to carry out a full interrogation. How much, for instance, does Western art music, part of a literate culture that survives on oral traditions of its own, deserve Sobol's short shrift? And isn't the mass printed page, if anything, more public and interactive than any performance based medium?

Sobol's 'oral' project is reinforced by his use of language. Pre-metropolitan, pre-technological imagery and metaphor — often the long, dusty treks of blues mythology — slouch through the book. This style reveals another dimension of the author's narrative, one that transforms the opposition of orality and literacy into one of modernism and anti-modernism. The rural romance of Sobol's language is not only allied to the author's distrust of the rationalising tendencies of literate modernisation — chief target of which is Gutenberg's movable type — but his privileging of the body and voice over modernity's exploration of the mind and the subconscious.

The book's second half addresses the work of poets like Vachel Lindsay, Carl Sandburg and William Carlos Williams. Citing Williams's poem "An Exercise" ("How/ Shall we/ Escape this modern/ Age/ And learn/ To breathe again"), Sobol takes these white Americans to be the "forerunners of the new bards", poets who claimed a form of vocality and physicality for their work in the thick of a cerebral era. Along with Jack Kerouac, Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Bob Dylan, these poets are praised for their recovery of a vocal spontaneity for their essentially written work. Yet those approaching written poetry from the other side are viewed less charitably. Having found a 'white' reconciliation of what he calls the word and the liberated body, Sobol looks for the 'black' reconciliation of the body and the liberated word — a word which, unlike Holiday's, would be a black sign, black signified. In the 1960s and 70s, Black Arts Movement writers like Larry Neal were on the same trail, looking to the rhythm, sound and play of black music for guidance. But, apparently too textual for Sobol, this body of work is all but ignored. The achievements of a writer like Sonia Sanchez, whose work is written to be performed but who screams her musicality even to the silent reader, remains unexplored.

In Sobol's reading, black America didn't unite the liberated word and its delivery with printed poetry but with rap, initially a public, performed, semi-improvised form. He devotes a sensitive, original discussion to the evolution of phrase and rhythm in rap, but decides that its absorption into the entertainment industry has turned that music into a stooge for the literate economy and its values. The improvisation and communality of HipHop is hidden in a litany of name live shows, studio recording sessions and cosy sample licensing agreements. Here we arrive at the digitopia of the title — almost a red herring, really, as Sobol's envisaged digital world occupies only the last nine pages of his book. His instinctive aversion to modern rationalisation finds a surprising but logical friend in the Internet, that agent of proliferation and confusion. He suggests that the digital reclaiming of musical property, whether courtesy of Napster or Akai, has created a new kind of relationship between artist and audience, one that, in the absence of the mediators of money and law might institute new forms of communality, immediacy and unfixed creation.

The desirability of such a cavalier attitude toward intellectual property and copyright is moot. Artists from oral traditions have already been fleeced enough, contractual literacy is good. But that misses Sobol's point, and to argue with his (tentative) conclusions would be to value product over process. That isn't the spirit in which the book was intended, and nor should it be the way in which it is judged. This is a thoughtful and committed presentation of themes that are too often neglected in writing about black music.

PHOTO: REDFERNS

Conspicuous by his absence: *No New York*, produced by Brian Eno

BETWEEN MONTMARTRE AND THE MUDD CLUB: POPULAR MUSIC AND THE AVANT-GARDE

BERNARD GENDRON

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS PBK $20.00

BY RICHARD HENDERSON

With typical wit and economy, the writer Stanley Booth isolated a critical problem with so many groups of the past two decades; their enterprise, in his estimation, was forever trapped within quotation marks. Taken more literally, this thought describes a flaw intrinsic to *Between Montmartre And The Mudd Club: Popular Music And The Avant Garde*, an exploration of the mutual attraction and influence exerted by visual artists and musicians working in vernacular forms during the 20th century. The philosophy professor Bernard Gendron is *Between Montmartre And The Mudd Club*'s putative author, but one comes away from his book with the thought that a facsimile edition of the articles he cites might have been preferable, and certainly would have proved a less distracting read. Gendron's need to acknowledge source material is taken to near pathological; at very least distracting, extremes throughout this curious book. The average sentence contains several adjacent adjectives, and often the subjunctive clause that ends the sentence is bounded by quotes. One senses reluctance on the author's part to draw an original conclusion, or even sketch a condensed account of period activity, without defacing the complexion of his book's layout by hyper-footnoting. The surfeit of quotation marks resembles nothing so much as ants marching across any given page.

Gendron can't decide on what would be the best tack for his study of the synergy between plastic arts and music. Often, the text simply echoes other, far more detailed pop music histories by Fred Goodman, Fredric Dannen and their like. *Between Montmartre* . reads tolerably well as a history of popular music criticism, though in its later chapters, Gendron puts too much weight on the opinions of an ill chosen few writers. That's to say, he makes further, unnecessary contributions to the ongoing deification of the late Lester Bangs. Whatever you think of Bangs, he was hardly the Will and Ariel Durant of his time. But evidently Gendron thinks otherwise.

The devil, as always, resides in the details, especially during the latter chapters that deal with the collision of 'high' and 'low' culture, examining the relationship of 'punk' to 'art'. To name but a few errors that simple fact checking and/or copy editing might have rectified: La Monte Young's name is misspelled; no patrons of the Mudd Club bought punk outfits at Fiorucci's (non-existent) East Village shop, Paul Nelson was The New York Dolls' A&R rep at Mercury, rather than their producer, a role for which Todd Rundgren suffered enough grief to at least merit proper credit, and, clearly, a moratorium is in order concerning Gray, a group whose membership included painter Jean-Michel Basquiat and whose very few performances did not merit anything like the gravitas subsequently ascribed to them by writers like Gendron — a point confirmed by Gray member Vincent Gallo in the scabrous notes to his recent film music compilation on Warp.

Who better to embody a conduit between art galleries, rock clubs and the painterly possibilities of recording technology than Brian Eno? His attraction to the creative fission generated by groups and the alternative art scene in New York led to him relocating there during the mid-'70s after increasingly frequent visits. Trained by some of England's most forward thinking artists, among them Tom Phillips, yet equally intrigued by the plasticity of recorded sound and the generation of electronic music by ostensible rock musicians (Jimi Hendrix, Phil Spector), Eno's personal enthusiasms and working methods appear tailor made for Gendron's thesis. His influence during his stay in lower Manhattan — producing Television's initial demos and Talking Heads' second through fourth albums, all the while reviving his own visual art activity via video installations — was felt by many of *Between Montmartre And The Mudd Club*'s objects of fascination. Eno was lionised by the downtown NYC art scene upon his move to Manhattan. The ultimate downtown artist Robert Longo chose Eno's freshly released *Music For Airports* to sear the ambience of a 1979 exhibit. Yet, somewhat incredibly, Eno lands only one reference here as the producer of the No Wave compilation, *No New York*, and he's neglected altogether in the book's woefully incomplete index.

Then there's Gendron's 'music meets film in an unending NYC art jam' angle. The notion that the Super 8 film makers associated with the Other Cinema (Amos Poe, Eric Mitchell and others) were the progenitors of "what we now call 'independent cinema'" is laughable. Their scene was contained within a few blocks and as many months of the East Village screenings of Underground USA and its unaccomplished ilk. Scott and Beth B, the best of all these film makers, who actually showed their work in instalments in Max's Kansas City and other rock clubs, are neglected altogether in Gendron's account. If the author had paid sufficient attention to his listed source material, he might have read (actress and No Wave muse Anya Phillips's interview decrying the then prevalent notion that musicians suddenly needed to be artists, photographers and film makers as well. most who aspired to polymath status were revealed as stoned dilettantes, not much more.

Ultimately, *Between Montmartre And The Mudd Club* shares that most exasperating quality with shoddily produced CD reissues of important recordings, that of widespread and lasting availability. This book enters library shelves bearing the University of Chicago Press brand, rightfully bestowed on many of the best music books issued in the past 25 years. His permanent place on course syllabuses and library shelves is thus guaranteed.

Long after recorded evidence of its subjects have disappeared, one fears that *Between Montmartre And The Mudd Club* will be New York art and No Wave music's one surviving text. Its worthy subjects deserve better than this poorly edited, selfconsciously over-referential book. Gendron's chronicle suffers the myopic detachment of a parent pouring over the kids' old records and rock magazines prior to putting them out for the yard sale.

On Location

Live and kicking: festivals, concerts, events in the flesh

LADYFEST LONDON 2002
LONDON GARAGE
UK

BY ANNE HILDE NESET & LINA DZUVEROVIC RUSSELL

In August, almost a decade after the Riot Grrrl explosion first swept across North America and Europe, London finally got it together to stage Ladyfest. Conceived in Olympia two years ago as a volunteer run festival of music and art made by women, this feminist extravaganza has already stormed ten or more cities from Chicago to Glasgow. Now thanks to a small but dedicated volunteer team of metropolitan girls (and a "token boy", as the programme puts it) the Ladyfest torch finally managed to light up London for four days of concerts, performances, panel discussions and screenings.

Mostly unfolding within the black-painted walls of North London's dingy Garage, the London Ladyfest stayed true to its DIY roots. Its spirited if chaotic programme offered anything from NYC fashion chicks running "Stitch 'n' Bitch" sessions (we did notice a group stitching in the Garage cafe but no bitching was reported) to workshops on DJing, zine publishing, film making, sewing and knitting (you won't find *that* at Ozzfest). There was even a seminar dedicated to reciting spoken word... *while baking scones*. Now that's something to try at home.

The film agenda mixed classics with a selection of newer, lo-fi musings on contemporary feminism, queer politics and activism. Lucy Thane's 1997 documentary *She's Real, Worse Than Queer* about survival as a punk rock dyke featured an 'all star' cast including lesbian punk poet Phranc and the awe-inspiring women behind queercore groups Team Dresch and Tribe 8. Meanwhile, Emma Hedditch the driving force of London's Grrrl film scene, hosted a screening of work from women's distributor Cinenova. But the rest of the film programme was scotched when an eagerly anticipated tape of *Bikini Kill On Tour* jammed the video player, leaving the disappointed audience wriggling in their seats for 45 minutes before expelling them into the glaring sunlight.

The evening programme thankfully proceeded as scheduled. Sporting bandaged chests, towering heels and tight miniskirts, Brighton DHR quartet Lolita Storm confused the audience with both their dress sense and their musical inclinations. Presenting a supremely bratty front, Romie Madina, Nhung Napalm and Specs mostly yelled over sampled electro beats powered by a guy called Jimi Too-Bad skulking in the shadows at the back. Lurching somewhere between Cobra Killer (without the humour) and Eminem (minus the rhymes), Lolita Storm delivered neither tempest nor conniving seductive charm.

Former Babes In Toyland lead singer and original Riot Grrrl godmother Kat Bjelland closed Friday with her new group Katastrophy Wife. Featuring Bjelland on guitar and vocals plus two *men* (one of them Bjelland's drummer husband Glen Mattson), Katastrophy Wife are in essence an older and more mature cousin of Babes In Toyland. Bjelland's frenzied punk riffs have lost a little of the spontaneity that went hand in hand with the Babes' youthfully aggressive anger. Her trademark vocal style, of repeatedly breaking into fierce shrieks throughout the set, is also the core of Katastrophy Wife's music. Tonight, however, instead of profanities, she punctuated her songs with apologies. Bjelland's need to impress on the the audience that she was "a little out of practice" sat oddly with the explosively free nature of her sound.

The following night, black clad, no-smiles and no-BS trio Helio Cuca, from south eastern Spain captivated the audience with their studiously delivered sharp guitar rock. Given the evening's dominating 'bells and whistles' tone it was especially exhilarating to witness guitarist Lidia Damunt reel off a whining guitar solo of a kind rarely heard outside the cock rock arena.

Four piece feminist friends Electrelane headed the bill with their melancholy repetitive blues fuelled by a squeaking vintage Juno synth (replacing their customary Farfisa), and rounded off with Venty Susman's very occasional vocals. Bland pop icon visuals flashed up behind them throughout, for no discernible reason. But they weren't so intrusive as to detract from Electrelane's music, which occupies the fierier end of post rock. Except that the group have dumped that genre's signature noodling for harder guitar riffs. They finished off with a flourish by snatching Big Man of Rock Bruce Springsteen's "I'm On Fire", and squeezing it into a streamlined speed up version that quickly burnt off its excess testosterone.

Mixing live music with spoken word, poetry and performance art is a brave but often thankless strategy formulated out of an institutional zeal to 'improve' people, whether or not there's a demand for it. On the night, audiences invariably want to rock not read, and for all the Ladyfest team's good intentions, the largely female spectators at the Garage were no different. Few performers inspired any interest in the rock crowd until a Radical Cheerleading duo struck sparks with their miniskirt outfits, pom-poms and synchronised routines. Holly and Celina's act is part of a rapidly spreading global trend of radical cheerleading. They fired up the masses with a series of constitutional cries: *"Resist! Resist! Fight the capitalist... Resist, resist, show them what they can kiss!"*, before turning around and slapping their posteriors to loud cheers.

Unfortunately, Vicki Bennett's People Like Us set had to be cancelled after the hardly sophisticated set up she uses to launch PLS's sample based visual and aural barrage baffled and defeated the Garage's trad rock backline crew. We did our best to ignore mumbled jokes about women and lightbulbs, until former Raincoats frontwoman and sometime Red Crayola member Gina Birch took the stage. With her guitar and vocals backed by a keyboard player and drummer, she extended the reach of her songs with home movie visuals and the moves of a black clad dancer. As distractions, these extras were no match for her elliptical guitar washes and aching throat-wrenching vocals, which sounded tremendous.

However, Chicks On Speed stole the festival honours with their witty exhausting energetic routines. Running around the stage like cleaners, they won over the crowd by rattling off absurdist quips like "No wonder there are so few women in music... it's so filthy here!" and "We love cleaning. Washing windows is sexy! It's so fulfilling to have babies!" More parade ground drill than rock performance, they overcame technical problems with a set full of self deprecating irony and blazing humour. They might have confessed "We Don't Play Guitars", while fingering phantom chords on self-designed bright green guitar belts, but Alex proved she could do the other rock stuff with her headlong staged dive into the crowd during "Fashion Rules". Their encore lived up to their name with a burst of Gabba meets-speed trash mayhem, which hit like a bullet in the ear.

When the house DJ finally played Bikini Kill's "Rebel Girl" – effectively the Riot Grrrl anthem – to approving cheers, it confirmed that Ladyfest was more of a celebration of shared beliefs than a straight music festival. Le Tigre were missed, but 'mother' Kathleen Hanna's presence was everywhere: on a signed T-shirt in the prize raffle; and in the festival's Le Tigre exhibition. Riot Grrrl's momentum being stalled by mainstream pop's marketing appropriation of 'girl power' was just a temporary glitch. Seeing so many groups rally to its flag while making it their own was truly inspiring. Long after it had been given up for dead, Ladyfest London proved the spirit of Riot Grrrl is very much alive and knitting.

Ladies in the house (this page): Gina Birch (right) and dancer. Facing page: Chicks On Speed (top); Electrelane

PHOTOS: GUY HEWITT

On Location

PHOTOS

KONEISTO FESTIVAL
HELSINKI VARIOUS VENUES
FINLAND

BY JEROME MAUNSELL

Now in its third year, the Koneisto festival for electronic music and arts has moved from the smaller town of Turku to Helsinki. But even this relocation to the capital didn't seem to be enough to contain the fertile niches of the current Finnish music scene. As well as the impossible amount of activity programmed in the festival's two huge main venues, there were also various freeform, unofficial events going on in various spaces dotted around the city all weekend. The central focus for Koneisto by night, though, was the Cable Factory, a towering block of warehouse spaces down by the docks, which usually functions as a giant warren of offices, recording studios and artists' workshops. In the afternoons, the thousands of young ravers and partygoers descended on the city's main beach, Hietaranta, for a rather more relaxed selection of live acts and DJs.

The sun in Helsinki only goes down for a few hours in late July, so the atmosphere at Koneisto, especially in the spaces of the waterfront Cable Factory – a surreal artificial garden area of astroturf, palm trees (tied down, to the irritation of the perfectionist organisers, with blue string) and a semi-transparent hut seemingly constructed out of plastic – was one of perpetual sunset and sunrise. Correspondingly, the energy levels of the crowd put the Brits to shame – and there wasn't a gurning face in sight. Nevertheless, inside the Cable Factory there were plenty of darker spaces to lose yourself in, with a cavernous main arena which easily rivalled the Turbine Hall at London's Tate Modern for size, and another eight rooms, including an amazingly well-equipped chill-out area spilling with light and several hundred mattresses.

Although the brief of the festival was to combine international acts with the best of Finnish produce, it must be said that all the best shows this year seemed to be by locals. Arriving on the Friday night, bloated on reindeer meat, I was greeted by an extraordinary performance from Ovail Virta, who played a dinky set of homemade electronica above the entrance gate. The quartet were seated with their lo-fi kit in their laps, on four bicycles welded together, suspended about 15 feet above the ground. They weren't the only group to have come up with a quirkily satisfying solution to the perennial problem of how to make electronic music look interesting live.

One of the main draws of the Friday night were the Op:I Bastards, playing what they had announced would be their last ever live set (problems with their record label have finally become intractable). One member of the duo stayed fairly sedate behind a rack of drum machines and electronics. The other, sporting a Native American headdress, was doing his best to rock out by squirming all over the huge stage of the main arena, and then donning a Flying V guitar Ted Nugent-style for some punishing rocktronic workouts. Their sound veered wildly from primitive electro – vox 'n' drum machine riffs in the vein of Suicide – to brutalised Status Quo. Judging from the visual backdrop of leather-clad, poodle-haired rockers projected behind the Bastards during their set, the Quo vibe was intentional. Silly, yes, but oodles more fun than the slightly lukewarm Stanton Warriors who followed, or Ken Ishii's later, predictable attempts to rival Jeff Mills's DJ style.

The following day got off to a great start with a sauna down by the sea before going to Hietaranta beach, which was in full swing with around 20,000 people swimming, sunbathing, picnicking and crowding around the two stages where reggae and Finnish HipHop were transmitted across the bay. Back in the Cable Factory that night there was a fantastic set by Cleaning Women, an absurdist power trio dressed in drag that plays self-built instruments made out of clotheshorses and pickle jars: one has the fret of a bass guitar affixed to his fragile clothes rack, another something like a guitar, and the third bashes his instrument with drumsticks. Endless lyrics about the joys of cleaning don't help you take them entirely seriously but they had a startlingly original, art house Industrial sound.

This was in stark contrast to The Orb, who played a straight back to 92 set with a host of tracks culled from *Adventures Beyond The Ultraworld* and *UF Orb* sped up with some lacklustre Trance beats. Alarmingly, they went down a storm. Elsewhere, a duo of electronics and heavily treated guitar who go by the name of Uni, from nearby Estonia provided a much more satisfying take on Ambient in the chill-out room. Earlier on, I also ventured down into La Bas, the basement area devoted to the more experimental wings of Finnish music. After negotiating a small, dank warren of rooms and corridors filled with video installations and paintings, there was a tiny, unilluminated space with an audience of around 30 cross-legged adventurers checking out a sequence of acts verging from the sublime to the ridiculous. Not all of it was quite in shape just yet, but it's good to see that there are plenty of stirrings underground which should keep Koneisto ticking over for the next few years.

N*E*R*D
LONDON SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE
UK

BY KODWO ESHUN

Just goes to show how wrong I can be. Figured me plus a few brainiac dumdums were the only ones nebbish enough to catch the debut of Virginia Beach maestros N*E*R*D. As The Neptunes, of course, it's been nigh on impossible to resist the bludgeon riffola of Pharell Williams and Chad Hugo's all conquering club bangers these past four years. Somehow though, I assumed the kids who thrilled to "I'm A Slave For You" and "I Just Wanna Love You (Give It To Me)" wouldn't really take to *In Search Of*. N*E*R*D's sumptuous, syntharamic manifesto of lust and longing among middle class hyperbrights. I figured N*E*R*D were such a brave and brilliant one-off, they were bound to go the overlooked way of misfits like DC Basehead, Boogie Monsters, Alphabet Soup, New Kingdom, Styles Of Beyond and a ton of other lost causes similar in their dissimilarity.

I admit it: I felt protective. But there was no need to fear, nothing to defend. London loves 'em. The Empire's packed to the gods with the Big Ugly's ultra-groomed and hyperblinged. Lotsa guys in white Kangol caps escorting lotsa girls with Mary J-style flicked hair, wearing flares with large white studded belts, asymmetrical T-shirts and green visors. And they all know all the lyrics to all the songs from *In Search Of*. From the get go, the crowd chant lines back to Williams as he launches into the menacing praise 'n' sneer of "Brain". Hugo, sadly, is AWOL, replaced by guest buddy Shay, while shaggy haired Kelis and rapper Lee Harvey drop by.

Songs like "Tape You", with its lascivious keyb refrain, the gorgeous mood changing "Provider", the synthoid "Lapdance" and the stone classic "Bobby James" are so impactful, so super pop, they withstand and transcend the deliblidinising buzz kill of Spy Mob, the group N*E*R*D brought in to play on version 2.0 of *In Search Of*. Spy Mob can only play two ways, compressed shatterrrriffs à la Linkin Park or much worse, a stiff jointed, self-satisfied skank patented by boneheads like No Doubt. Given the personality bypass of his backing group, it's lucky that Williams is blessed with charisma to burn. With his feline physiognomy, stiff armed B-boyisms, staccato upper body turns, air geetar solo during "Bobby James" and imitation synth noises, Williams carries the show, right the way through to the luscious extruded encores of "Run To The Sun" and "Stay Together".

Literalists might gripe that the guy can't sing, but that misses the point, great non singers like Williams affect you with their quark, their strangeness and their charm in ways perfect pitch seals right off. Especially in a HipHop-invested atmosphere like tonight, the very act of harmonising, of reaching for high notes, of crooning bridges and choruses, dissolves bravado and melts emotional armour. The result is that, for vast areas of this short night, the emotional temperature is totally unHipHop while the mores and the mentality are totally HipHop. So much HipHop is so good right now because you're not quite sure if it really is HipHop anymore. And this dissolution, sometimes cheerful, often anxious, is the index of real cultural confidence. Dear N*E*R*D, long may your geek flag fly.

CHILDREN OF AGHARTA
NEW YORK VILLAGE UNDERGROUND
USA

BY JASON GROSS

Miles Davis's electrified early 70s period was his most controversial as well as his most innovative. From 1969's *Bitches Brew* to the massive 1975 live albums *Agharta* and *Pangaea*, the trumpeter became a techno primitivist practising electronic juju, wedding some of the most stringent classical avant gardisms with some of the most culturally attuned African-American music. While he was peering into an artistic and personal abyss, he toured extensively, documenting his travels with no less than six double albums, stretching his compositions past the length of album sides. Although group alumni like Weather Report and Chick Corea attempted to pick up the gauntlet he threw down, they almost never 'threw down' themselves, usually offering only watered-down approximations of the master's uninhibited music.

So there was enough reason to be sceptical when another alumnus of that time, guitarist Pete Cosey, sought to revive this challenging music. Of course, Cosey is no ordinary sessionman: his impressive resumé also includes stints with Earth, Wind & Fire (as a founding member), the AACM, Bo Diddley and Sun Ra. Cosey's tribute group Children Of Agharta (named after that live album, which Cosey's incendiary guitar work helped to ignite), features other 70s groupmates such as saxophonists Gary Bartz and John Stubblefield and, perhaps recognising the void that cannot be completely filled, no trumpet to approximate their former leader.

For their world premiere, a six-song set at a small West Village club, the music was shorter on grooves, longer on solos and almost devoid of Ambient atmospherics and the poignant silences that Davis would occasionally plunge into (except for the languid "Ife"). A seated Cosey maintained a keyboard-like fluidity over his instrument with hands that were lethal weapons: his balancing act between control and chaos was a bracing reminder of what a guitar hero is supposed to sound like. Even when he plunked on a thumb piano it sounded like he hadn't put his guitar down. He gracefully stole the show, providing the most commanding playing of the group.

Stubblefield (who occasionally blew himself out of breath) managed to let out some inspired solos (even quoting Monk's "Bemsha Swing"), and the rhythm section, featuring Johnny 'Juice' Rosado's rhythmic turntable scratches, held up their parts well, especially when they turned "Black Satin" into James Brown's "Cold Sweat". Unfortunately, rapper Baba Israel's low key rhyming dominated two songs ("Jack Johnson" and a new Cosey tune "Gnots") with the group only providing serviceable backing, occasionally sparked by solo interjections (though none of this was much worse than Davis's own later rap experiments). Later, Howlin' Wolf's "Evil" featured Cosey (who recorded a version with the blues legend himself) on soul croon with some interesting stop-start Meters funk, actually sounding better than some of Davis's own later blues experiments.

Just as Miles intended when he first unleashed this music, it will be documented in the manner that it was usually presented, as a live recording to be released next year. In all, the whole project seemed promising, confusing, wild and very occasionally misguided – just like Davis's original music.

Koneisto capers (clockwise from top left): Cleaning Women, Helsinki's Cable Factory, dancing in the street, Ovail Virta, the chill-out room, Skillsters, Op:I Bastards bow out in style

ZAPPANALE #13
BAD DOBERAN GALOPPRENNBAHN & KAMP THEATER
GERMANY

BY BEN WATSON

This July, Bad Doberan's Wolfhard Kutz held yet another Zappa festival, marking the unlucky 13th year with special features: the town centre unveiling of a bronze bust of Frank Zappa by Czech sculptor Vaclav Cesak, a total of 100 musicians (including ten ex Zappa alumni) spread between 18 groups, an attendance of over 2000 on each of three days, appearances by Zappa's younger brother Bob and baby sister Candy, an interview with Miss Pamela from The GTOs and a lecture by Zappologist Jim Cohen; plus an exhibition of Zappological arcana in the town gardens.

Historically, Mecklenburg Vorpommern (the area east of Denmark and south of the Baltic) has been Germany's land of resorts, recuperation and efficient agriculture. There's no unsightly urban sprawl. Indeed, the villages' half-timbered houses, cobbled streets and red brick, old Gothic churches, surrounded by their neat allotments and dreamy wheatfield horizons, have an almost Disney like cuteness. A network of cycle paths and smooth running railways give the eco conscious an unspoiled playground. How many rock festivals have you arrived at by *steam train*?

Between 1949 and 1989, the region was part of Communist East Germany. The 60s rock revolution was frowned on by the authorities. Paradoxically, because the money men never moved in, its institutions here have a fan-based, DIY flavour lacking in the West (except perhaps in punk). Joachim Benn, a radical lawyer from nearby Schwenn, self-published a book this year named *John Lennon: I Don't Believe In The Beatles*, while Bad Doberan's Zappa fervour is fabled. Organised by Kutz's brainchild, the Art Society (membership 180 and climbing), the Zappanale is a labour of love.

Understandably, local politicians used the event to vaunt their town, spouting the jargon introduced by the fall of Communism and German reunification ("Gerechtigkeit und Öffentlichkeit"). Political tensions surfaced. Only the CDU (conservative) speaker was actually booed, though the incongruity of having the Mothers perform "It Can't Happen Here". Zappa's a cappella dada masterpiece, at an official occasion was piquant. Zappa's "Sofa", played on tenor, baritone and tuba by members of Ed Palermo's octet, was appropriately stirring and tender. The ceremony ushered in hot sunshine that lasted the rest of the event.

In Bad Doberan's Kamp Theater, actor Daniel Rohr from Zurich presented a specially written piece that successfully transposed Zappa's words into a German language playlet. Songs and philosophical tidbits from interviews became theatre of the absurd (Rohr specialises in Samuel Beckett), highlighting the hallucinatory barminess of Zappa's oeuvre ("St Alphonso's Pancake Breakfast" as a German monologue was particularly head-spinning). Rohr also fielded premier musicians: the kazoo break from "You're Probably Wondering Why I'm Here" had just the splenetic uncool required.

Given that Cohen – also the Zappanale's MC and interpreter – had Jimmy Carl Black relate the story of Berlin on 16 October 1968, when leftwing students sabotaged a Mothers gig, one might view the Zappanale as endorsing the "practical conservatism" of Zappa's own politics. However, when the Nasal Retentive Orchestra – a fluent covers outfit from Paris complete with a fantastic keyboardist who improvised musique concrète on his Korg Z – attacked a chicken carcass onstage to protest France's recent electoral 'choice' between Chirac and Le Pen, the anger and intelligence of frontman Jeff Marschalle were appropriately Zappa-like. Project/Object from America are the Rolls Royce of Z-cover groups, here fronted by Ike Willis (who sang with Zappa between 1978-88). They expertly recreate Zappa's 80s orchestral rock sound. Willis and guitarist André Cholmondeley (who excelled on his "Inca Roads" guitar solo) also made lyrical adjustments to vilify Bush and NATO, showing that Zappa's principled anti war position – and playful way of updating a lyric – haven't been forgotten.

The Zappa legacy is varied enough to accommodate many kinds of expression. Cosmik Debris from Budapest were thunderously exotic: Zappa as the anthem of the Magyar horde. Their brilliant 15 year old altoist provided "Easy Meat" with blessed bebop relief. From Germany, Dwarf Nebula's muddled interpretations were saved by a powerful female singer; Landplage*'s set triumphed via sheer punk aggression. Guitarists Pierrejean Gaucher and Christopher Godin imbued Zappa's themes with ECM-style tastefulness; the Euphonium Freakestra brought on Günter 'Baby' Sommer, Germany's wide eyed free drumming legend, and created an experimental set by confronting the linear drive of "My Guitar" and "Frogs With Dirty Little Lips" with Sommer's omnidirectional beat and ethnic forgeries. The teenage musicians of Ossi Dun negotiated the fiendish complexities of "Sinister Footwear" as Metal virtuosi, causing much jaw dropping.

The high points were Candy Zappa's raunchy soul vocal on "Directly From My Heart To You", Ed Palermo's wonderfully original big band arrangements of "Sleep Dirt" and "Regyptian Strut", and the astonishing vocal pyrotechnics of Napoleon Murphy Brock with The Grandmothers at the close. Here accuracy and spontaneity found a true dialectic, and the Zappanale lifted into trans-historical sublimity. □

WHAT IS MUSIC 2002
SYDNEY VARIOUS VENUES
AUSTRALIA

BY JON DALE

This year's choice of venue for the Sydney leg of Australia's annual What Is Music festival raised some eyebrows. Far from the usual spaces What Is Music inhabits (the pubs and clubs of inner city Sydney and Melbourne), half of the festival was conducted in the rarefied atmosphere of The Studio, a performance space that's part of the Sydney Opera House.

The formality of this year's surroundings led to some audience members asking whether festival founders Oren Ambarchi and Robbie Avenaim were gunning for the legitimisation of the festival within the wider discourse of the high arts. The crisis of definition posited by the festival's name is a touchy subject for observers and participants alike, and there were suspicions that Ambarchi and Avenaim were complicit in attempting to reclaim the 'experimental' for the highbrow. However, Ambarchi offers a down to earth explanation for the choice of venue. The combination of the dire situation for presenting live music in Sydney, and the low volume of many of the artists at the festival, made The Studio the perfect space.

The choice of venue made sense for the Japanese performers from the 'onkyo' movement. The duo of Toshimaru Nakamura and Sachiko M found the artists winding their respective instruments – no-input mixing board and no-sampler sampler – around each other with a strange, forbidding logic. Yet their performance didn't come across as austere: the purity of intent was engrossing, creating a sound of voluptuous clarity. Tetuzi Akiyama's acoustic guitar set traded the concise for the exploratory. Akiyama occasionally fumbled, or appeared lost, but when he bowed the strings to coax ringing, glassy harmonics from his instrument, he provided the most beautiful moments of Friday night. His duo with Günter Müller at the Pact Theatre was similarly stunning. With the two sliding in and out of phase, Müller's bowed cymbals and dense electronics wove around Akiyama's guitar, which took on a distended blues bent thanks to judicious use of his slide.

In previous years, What Is Music has featured a wild array of laptop artists, sourced from rogue outposts. The laptop contingent was rather depleted this year, and only Ai Yamamoto and Pimmon rose to the occasion. Pimmon's set must have been his densest yet, an intricately latticed wall of shredded sound which, though noisy, never descended into outright blastitude. His sculpting of high frequency soul siren and shuddering drones was almost sensual. And Pimmon seemed seriously engrossed in his music, so drawn into the fragile noise he drew from his laptop that any arguments about the laissez faire performances of laptop artists were rendered moot.

The most arresting 'performance' of the festival was Sachiko M's solo set. Alone under a glazed spotlight, seated behind a table shorn of all but her small, humble instrument, Sachiko M sent singing pure tones spiralling through the air. She introduced new layers of sound judiciously, keeping the listener suspended in a state of joyous tension. Vienna's Fuckhead were arresting for entirely different reasons. In the more 'traditional' setting of the Roma Room, they gave What Is Music a kick in the pants, with an absurd set that looked like Laibach performing in an S&M bar after taking a course in Aktionism. Their music may have been indistinct – Industrial Metal tarted up with computer glitchery – but their performance was wonderful: a hilarious, homoerotic free for all. Whether stripping naked (save unsubtly placed gaffer tape) and rolling around on the floor in a mess of feathers and beer, or extending a washing line between two group members' buttocks, Fuckhead were the visual spectacle What Is Music needed.

But for visual spectacle, nothing surpassed Voice Crack's desks of 'cracked electronics': toys, crisscrossed wires and glinting, flashing lights. Watching Andy Gühl and Norbert Möslang manipulate their equipment was fascinating, and their sound was vast, bracing, and rapturous – just the way 'noise' should be. The duo reconvened two nights later with Otomo Yoshihide as an extra member, and this set was if anything wilder, with Otomo's turntable feedback rumbling underneath Voice Crack's percolations.

What Is Music's Australian contingent were just as impressive, drawing attention to a burgeoning 'scene' of exploratory artists who are every bit the equal of their overseas counterparts. Highlights included Minit's layered folds of mesmeric analogue electronics, Joyce Hinterding's ether-surfing drones and The Klor's frisky electronica. A trio of Chris Abrahams, Oren Ambarchi and Robbie Avenaim showed restraint, with Ambarchi humbling his guitar into snapping low-level hum around loops. Abrahams pondered over the resonance of hammer hitting string, while Avenaim expertly placed pointillist sounds sourced from his extended kit.

Ever the charismatic square peg in the round hole, Brooklyn's David Grubbs ended the festival with a string of eloquent songs that fed the fragmented spirit of Mayo Thompson, the sultry sway of bossa and the winsome strum of Witchseason folk through Grubbs's literate yet passionate craftsmanship. The central crisis of What Is Music may have been temporarily answered by Grubbs's performance, but compared to everything that came before, his set was rendered all the more alien.

Royal Festival Hall
Queen Elizabeth Hall
Purcell Room

PASSION

THE MUSIC OF LOUIS ANDRIESSEN
4 - 17 OCTOBER 2002

JEFF BECK

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'FEW ARE MORE TALENTED THAN JEFF BECK'
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SUN 22 SEPT RFH 8PM
FEAT. JARVIS COCKER & FRIENDS
AND MEMBERS OF HIGH LLAMAS

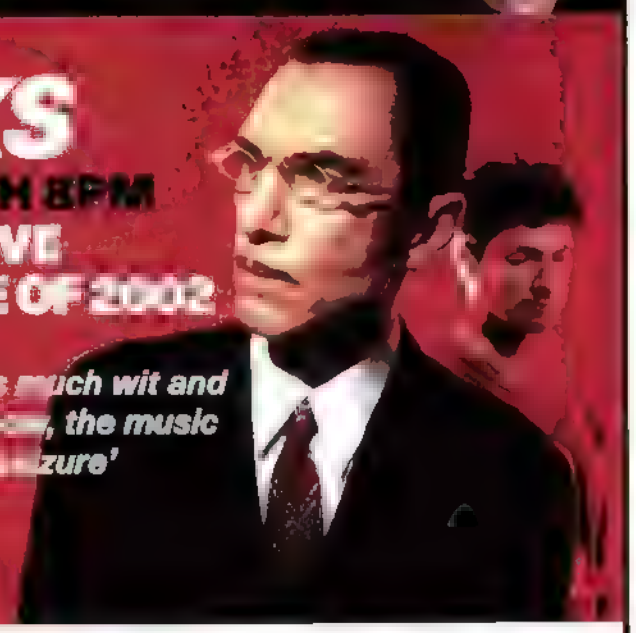
'What a cool fuck. With a voice like mud and honey and velvet and coal' Time Out

Part of The Song's The Thing festival. SBC in association with Serious

SPARKS

SAT 19 OCT RFH 8PM
THEIR FIRST LIVE
PERFORMANCE OF 2002

'If a group with half this much wit and invention came along now, the music industry would have a seizure'
The Guardian



BOX OFFICE 020 7960 4242 BOOK ONLINE WWW.RFH.ORG.UK (NO FEE)

Out There

This month's selected festivals, live events, clubs and broadcasts.
Send info to *The Wire*, 2nd Floor East, 88-94 Wentworth Street, London E1 7SA, UK
Fax +44 (0)20 7422 5011, listings@thewire.co.uk
Compiled by Phil England

UK festivals

ACOUSMENTAL
SHEFFIELD
A three concert festival of experimental music featuring Ensemble 11 and pianist Philip Thomas performing works by Richard Barrett, Bryn Harris and others alongside electroacoustic works (27 September, 7.30pm), the electronic Transient v Resident duo of Martin Archer and Chris Bywater joined by Philip Thomas on prepared piano (28, 3pm) and improvising pianist Chris Burn joined by Sheffield friends including guitarist John Jasnoch (28, 7.30pm). Sheffield Millennium Galleries, 0114 278 2655, acousmental.cjb.net

BITE: 02
LONDON
This month's highlights of the Barbican International Theatre Events season include major new works by Merce Cunningham, Robert Wilson & Tom Waits, and Steve Reich & Beryl Korot. John Cage's collaborator and partner Merce Cunningham returns with his legendary Dance Company to perform new works with live music performed by an ensemble led by Takehisa Kosugi and written by Cage and John King (10-12 September) and by Cage, Kosugi and Christian Wolff (13-14). *Three Tales* comprises three new works combining music by Steve Reich with video by Beryl Korot. The music is performed by Ensemble Modern and the 'tales' trace the impact of new technologies on the world (18-21). *Woyzeck* is a new collaboration between director Robert Wilson, Tom Waits and Kathleen Brennan (27 September-5 October). London Barbican, 020 7638 8891, www.barbican.org.uk

THE SONG'S THE THING
LONDON
Second annual festival celebrating songs. Highlights include Ryuichi Sakamoto's interpretation of bossa novas by Antonio Carlos Jobim (21 September), Lee Hazlewood performing his twisted alt.Country (22), a celebration of the work of Kirsty MacColl by her friends (23), a celebration of British comic songs, *From The Sublime To The Ridiculous* (25), Kings Of Convenience's Erlend Øye's new collaboration with electronic producers (26), and free daytime concerts courtesy of the Kashmir Klub. London South Bank Centre, 21-29 September, 020 7960 4242, www.rfh.org.uk

International festivals

LA BATIE
SWITZERLAND
Two weeks of music, dance and theatre including a night devoted to 'Insect Music' with Biosphere, Bus and Andrew Pekler at Geneva's Natural History Museum; a live set by mystical folk punk outfit Sixteen Horsepower (7 September), reggae star Horace Andy (14); and an Alpine cable car escapade with Irène Tétaz, Alan Lamb, Stefan Schneider, sculptors and dancers. Geneva various venues, 29 August-14 September, www.batie.ch

DISSONANZE
ITALY
Third international festival of electronic music and digital art co-sponsored by *The Wire*. Live performances in the afternoon are complemented by a programme of videos in the evening followed by dance events into the night. The line up includes Biosphere, Luke Slater, Radio Boy, Thomas Brinkmann, Maurizio Martusciello, Prefuse 73, The Hacker, Eclat, Røyksopp and others. Rome various venues, 13-14 September, 00 39 06 4782 5797, www.dissonanze.it

FOURTH ANNUAL HIGH ZERO FESTIVAL OF EXPERIMENTAL IMPROVISED MUSIC
USA
This literally named event features 30 improvisors from North America and Europe playing in new combinations over four days. Musicians include Mike Cooper, Thomas Lehn, Peter Zummo, Eugene Chadbourne, Daniel Carter and John Berndt. Baltimore The Theater Project, 26-29 September, 8pm, $12 per show, www.highzero.org

LOOK AT THE MUSIC/SEE SOUND
SWEDEN
Major event encompassing perfomances, exhibitions and installations taking place in various venues in Sweden and covering a wide array of avant garde activity, from improvised music and underground rock to sound art and electronics. The visual art wing of the event opens with a night of performances by Sten Sandell, Michael Zerang, Andreas Tilliander, Leif Elggren's Sons Of God, Staalplaat Soundsystem, *The Wire* Sound System and more (Brosarp Neon Gallery, 28 September), and continues with a series of exhibitions of artwork by Åke Hodell, Peter Brötzmann, Anton Corbijn and Christian Marclay, as well as Covered Up, which presents examples of sleeve art from labels including FMP, Staalplaat, Mego and Quakebasket, and musicians Axel Dorner, Sten Sandell, Jim O'Rourke and more. The exhibitions are split between Ystad Art Museum, Brosarp Neon Gallery and Kabusa Art Hall. All open on 28 September and run for various periods. The performance programme includes a series of improvised evenings featuring Kim Gordon, Ikue Mori, DJ Olive, Jim O'Rourke, Thurston Moore, Aaly Trio, Mats Gustafsson, Yoshimi P-We, Peter Brötzmann, Kevin Drumm, Alan Licht, Keith Rowe, Axel Dorner, Ken Vandermark, Thomas Lehn, Christian Marclay and more. The concerts happen at Ystad Art Museum, Chorus and Theatre, and Brosarp Neon Gallery, 4-14 October. www.neongallery.nu

TAKTLOS BERN
SWITZERLAND
Multidirectional new music event featuring 242 Pilots and Alva Noto (Carsten Nicolai) live plus video clips by Christian Fennesz, Curd Duca, Matthew Herbert, Thomas Brinkmann and others (7 September), *Turn Of The Century Music In Flight*, a flying grand piano sound installation by Alvin Curran (12 & 13), Curran's new Filharmonica group with Fred Frith and Shelley Hirsch, Joan Jeanrenaud & William Winant, and Cortex featuring Alex Buess, Daniel Buess & Roger Graf, (13). Filharmonica plus Steamboat Switzerland playing music by Michael Wertmuller (14). Bern various venues, www.taktlos.bern.ch

TONFOLGEN – SOUNDPORTRAITS
AUSTRIA
Celebrating 20 years of the Wiener Musik Galerie and its exploration of the area between electronic music and jazz. The programme includes Pro Mente Groove Department, a project for people with learning difficulties, Skuli Sverrisson's solo electric bass with electronics, Icebreaker playing works by Yannis Kyriakides, Stewart Wallace, Richard Craig and Michael Gordon (19 September), Bill Dixon Quartet featuring Evan Parker, John Lindberg and Warren Smith, Peter Herbert's You're My Third, and Christine Tobin Ensemble (20), Franz Koglmann's Monoblue Quartet featuring Tony Coe, Mike Svoboda's *14 Attempts To Try And Get To Love Wagner* with texts by Thomas Mann, Filippo Tomaso Marinetti, Friedrich Nietzsche, Camille Saint-Saëns, Erik Satie and Richard Wagner (21). Vienna Musik Galerie at Kunsthalle Wien Project Space, 00 43 1 544 8929, www.wmg.at

UNDER THE INFLUENCE: CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE
USA
A festival marking the 50th anniversary of the first performance of John Cage's multimedia work *Theatre Piece No 1* – widely regarded as the first mixed media happening. The event is also a celebration of the inspirational work of the radical Black Mountain College, which hosted that initial performance of *Theatre Piece*, and whose alumni include Cage, Merce Cunningham, Buckminster Fuller, Willem De Kooning, Robert Motherwell and Robert Rauschenberg. The festival will feature artists whose work has been influenced by the College. Participants include musicians Pauline Oliveros, Tony Conrad, Negativland's Mark Hosler and John Cobb, poets Patrick Herron, Michael Boughn and Lee Ann

The Wire 20: Paris Instants Chavirés/ Batofar

The Wire 20: Paris/Instants Chavirés

14 October 20:00
IN THE TRADITION featuring
JOHANNES BAUER (trombone)
ABDELHAIM BENNANI (saxophone)
ALAN SILVA (bass synthesizer)
ROGER TURNER (percussion)

15 October 20:00
JACKIE-O MOTHERFUCKER
VOLCANO THE BEAR

16 October 20:00
EVAN PARKER (saxophones)
& LAWRENCE CASSERLEY (electronics)
KEITH ROWE (guitar)
& OREN AMBARCHI (guitar)

17 October 20:00
JOHN WALL (live sound diffusion)
& MARK EDWARDS (percussion)
PHILIP JECK (turntables)

Tickets
11 Euros (on the door)
9 Euros (in advance from Bimbo Tower, Wave, L'oeil du Silence)
7 Euros (for Instants Chavirés members)

Instants Chavirés
7 Rue Richard Lenoir
93100 Montreuil
Metro Robespierre (ligne 9)
T +33 1 42 87 25 91
instants.chavires@wanadoo.fr
www.instantschavires.fr.st

The Wire 20: Paris/Batofar

15 October 21:00
ELECTRELANE (live)
LUOMO (live)
PORTABLE (live)
THE WIRE SOUND SYSTEM (DJ set)

16 October 21:00
TECHNO ANIMAL (live)
THE BUG vs TECH LEVEL 2 (DJ set)

17 October 21:00
CIRCLE (live)
V/VM (live)
PORTABLE (DJ set)
THE WIRE SOUND SYSTEM (DJ set)

18 October 21:00
MAX TUNDRA (live)
PORTER RICKS (live)
MARK KIRBY (VERTICAL FORM) (DJ set)

Tickets
9.5 Euros

Batofar
Quai F. Mauriac
75013 Paris
Metro BNF Quai de la Gare
T +33 1 40 33 37 17
batofar@batofar.org
www.batofar.org

The Wire 20: Paris is part of *The Wire* magazine's 20th anniversary celebrations. It is organised by Les Instants Chavirés and Batofar (association Made in Boat) and is supported by the British Council, the Finnish Embassy in Paris and Eurostar.

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DISSONANZE 2002

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MUSIC
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CROSSOVER MAX DURANTE
ECLAT MARCO PASSARANI
PREFUSE 73 RADIO BOY
LUKE SLATER SWAYZAK
RICARDO VILLALOBOS
XPLOSIVA

VIDEO
CANE CAPOVOLTO
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ONEDOTZERO PINK TWINS
THE RESIDENTS URSULA SCHERRER &
MICHAEL J. SCHUMACHER SLICOM
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LOL COXHILL AND KNUT AUFERMANN 100TH BIRTHDAY

starring The Birthday Collective...

Tuesday 17th Sept 2002
100 Club
100 Oxford Street
London W1
Doors at 7pm, gig at 7:15pm
Ticket price £10, £7 concessions
Info 020 7636 0933
No advance tickets, early arrival advised

David Bedford, Steve Beresford, Alexis Taylor, Bob Cobbing, Mike Cooper, Lu Edmonds, John Edwards, Sue Ferrar, Dave Green, Michael Kosmides, Hugh Metcalfe, Barre Phillips, Maggie Nicols, Steve Noble, Evan Parker, Jennifer Pike, Paul Rutherford, Pat Thomas, Stan Tracey, Roger Turner, Mike Walter, Sarah Washington, Veryen Weston and more!

Juliet Sharp

Kathrin Brunnert

Grafik Laborant

ACOUSMENTAL

with Philip Thomas
Radical New Music
Friday 27 September
7:30 pm £7/5

Transient Resident
Electroacoustic Improvisation
Saturday 28 September
3:00 pm £5

Chris Burn and Friends
Twisted Sound Icons
Saturday 28 September
7:30 pm

Millennium Galleries, Sheffield
tickets on the door or in advance
(tel. 0114 266 8701)

Brown, installation artists Yoko Ono and Jack Dangers, educators Sue Riley and Greg Ulmer, film maker Craig Baldwin, dancer Ray Eliot Schwartz and many more The event will also include workshops, film screenings and roundtable discussions. Asheville various venues, 19-22 September, 001 828 299 9306/001 828 236 9777, www.blackmountaincollege org/festival/

VILLETTE NUMERIQUE
FRANCE
First biennial festival devoted to the digital arts The music programme includes live performances by Ryoji Ikeda/Carsten Nicolai/ Mika Vainio, Kraftwerk, Christian Fennesz and Arnaud Rebotini taking on the GRM production studio, and Akufen, plus DJ sets from LFO, Francois K, John Thomas and Suburban Nights. La Villette various venues, 24-29 September, www.villette-numerique com

WEST COAST FESTIVAL OF NUMUSIC
NORWAY
Norwegian festival including a performance by Biosphere, a lecture on the music of Karlheinz Stockhausen, a new work by Nils Henrik Asheim for tuba, percussion and live electronics, a night hosted by the Smalltown Supersound label with HoH, Kim Hiorthøy and Jaga Jazzist's Martin Horntveth, and surroundsound audio-visual projections of electronic works by Stockhausen, Aphex Twin, Iannis Xenakis, Autechre and Gottfried Michael Koenig. There will also be exhibitions, installations and a screening of Iara Lee's history of electronic music, *Modulations*. Stavanger various venues, 20-22 September, numusic@online.no

Special events

AUDIOSCOPE
UK
All day event to raise funds for the national charity for the homeless, Shelter. Birmingham post-rock unit Pram preview material from their forthcoming album, supported by symphonic rockers Nought, plus Reuben, Eeebeee, Souvans and Sunnydale Noise Sub-Element. Oxford The Zodiac, 7 September, 1pm-2am, 07974 736 802, www.audioscope.co.uk

CAGE 2002 – 90/10
UK
A chance to discuss, perform and listen to the work of John Cage in a day long event marking what would have been the composer's 90th birthday as well as the tenth anniversary of his death. The key note speaker is David Nicholls, performers include Michael Finnissy and Tim Ovens, and the day will culminate with a Musicircus event. University of Southampton, 21 September, www.soton.ac.uk/~cgresser/cage/

LOL COXHILL & KNUT AUFERMANN'S 100TH BIRTHDAY PARTY
UK
London Musicians' Collective presents an all-star cast to celebrate the 70th birthday of saxophonist Lol Coxhill and the 30th birthday of feedback artist Knut Aufermann Expect free jazz, songs and anecdotes from David Bedford, Steve Beresford, Bob Cobbing, Mike Cooper, Lu Edmonds, John Edwards, Hugh Metcalfe, Maggie Nicols, Steve Noble, Evan Parker, Jennifer Pike, Paul Rutherford, Pat Thomas, Stan Tracey, Roger Turner, Mike Walter, Sarah Washington, Veryan Weston and special guests London 100 Club, 17 September, 7pm, £10/£7, 020 7636 0933, www.l m c.org.uk

DMC/TECHNICS WORLD DJ CHAMPIONSHIPS
UK
Annual turntablist battle ground. London Brixton Academy, 14-15 September, 5 11pm, £15 per day or £25 for the weekend, 0870 5344 444, www.dmcworld.com

FROZEN WHITE
UK
London Musicians' Collective presents two mixed media collaborations Stan Wijnan's *Frozen White* is an interactive dance, video and music work based around the theme of empowerment and liberation of the medically incarcerated. The dancers' movements influence the live music provided by trombonist Gail Brand, harpist Rhodri Davies and percussionist Steve Noble – through a soundbeam sensor system. The evening also includes a collaborative performance by electronic musician Phil Durrant and dancer Sophia Lycouris. London ICA, 6-8 September, 8pm, £10–£8, 020 7930 3647, www ica.org.uk

LAPTOPS LIVE
UK
ICA's electronic night returns after a summer break with the impressive line-up of Ryoji Ikeda, Carsten Nicolai and Pan Sonic's Mika Vainio. London ICA, 24 September, £10/£9, 020 7930 3647, www.ica.org.uk

NOT IN OUR NAME
UK
Various Scratch Orchestra related artists get together for an evening in opposition to the War on Terrorism. Performers include AMM's John Tilbury, Akemi Kuniyoshi Group, poet Adnan Mitchell, Jem Finer, New Scratch Project, Hugh Shrapnell, Dave Smith, Michael & Tom Chant and Carol Finer, plus installations and a music/video collaboration. All profits go to the anti-war movement. London Union Chapel, 14 September, 7pm, £10/£5, 0870 120 1349, www.unionchapel.org.uk

OLIGARCH SHIT TRANSFUSION FREE MUSIC FESTIVAL
UK
Second free music weekender. The first night features double bassist Simon H Fell in a duo with vocalising drummer Tim Goldie, Nishide Takehiro & Romuald Wadych objects and voice duo, and Chris Cundy & James Dunn clarinet and electronics duo (31 August). The Sunday night continues with an Alan Wilkinson/Nathaniel Catchpole saxophone duel, Malcolm Goldie laptop solo, and Michael Rodgers & Tim Goldie bass and drums duo (1 September). Visual work by Tim and Malcolm Goldie plus free vegan food complete the programme. London The Foundry, 8pm, free/donations, 020 8985 2816, goldieslof@hotmail.com

RESONANCE 104.4 FM
UK > THE WORLD
London Musicians' Collective's year-long radio project continues with regular slots including *Diggers* with Edwin Pouncey (Tuesdays 5-6:45pm), *Scratching The Surface* with Mike Barnes (Tuesdays, 8:30-10pm), *One Way Single Parent Family Favourites* with Billy Jenkins (Sundays, noon-2pm), *Out Of The Blue Radio* with Chris Cutler (daily, 11:30-midnight), *Taking A Life For A Walk* with Caroline Kraabel (Saturdays, 1-1.30pm) and *Blacktronica* with Charlie Dark

(Sundays 10 11.30pm) Check out daily listings for one-offs scheduled at short notice. Broadcasts are across central London 5pm 1am weekdays and noon 1am at weekends Web streaming is via www.resonancefm.com

SECOND WORLD CONFERENCE ON MUSIC AND CENSORSHIP
DENMARK
Self exp anatory conference Working languages will be English and French Copenhagen WHO Conference Hall, 28 29 September, 00 45 3269 8920, www freemuse org

SIREN SPACE
UK
The Wire contributor David Toop has written a piece to be performed on Tug Horns on the River Thames as part of the Thames Festival Saxophonist Lol Coxhill will be in position on Hungerford Bridge interacting with the sound of the horns, which are mounted on tugboats. The piece also includes spoken word, in the form of reminiscences of veteran watermen and percussive rhythms played from the riverbanks London River Thames between Blackfriars Bridge and Waterloo Bridge, 14-15 September, free, www thamesfestival.org

THRILL JOCKEY 10TH ANNIVERSARY
UK
All day event featuring Tortoise, The Sea & Cake, Trans Am, Chicago Underground Duo, Bobby Conn, Eleventh Dream Day Brokeback and Radian London Ocean 15 September, midday midnight £20 advance (ticket price includes free CD), 020 7314 2800, 020 8533 0111, www ocean org.uk

VARIABLE RESISTANCE: TEN HOURS OF SOUND FROM AUSTRALIA
USA
A listening room featuring playbacks of material by contemporary Australian sound artists The playbacks are grouped into ten themed hour long programmes The opening night features live performances from David Brown, Pimmon, Philip Samartzis and Darren Verhagen (7 September) and a CD featuring the exhibiting artists accompanies the exhibition San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 8-17 September, 001 415 357 4000, www sfmoma.org

On stage

ALTERNATIVE TV
The Termite Club presents Mark Perry and his punk originals in a one off date supported by Ceramic Hobs from Blackpool's psychiatric underground drunken hillbilly realism from Milovan Srdenovic and extreme noise from Candi Nook Leeds The Brudenell Social Club, 6 September, 8pm, £6/£4, 01943 468615, www termiteclub cjb net

AMM + CHRISTIAN WOLFF
Major chance music meeting. London Conway Hall, 10 September, 020 7242 8032

BADLAND
The free jazz trio of alto player Simon Rose, double bassist Simon Fell and drummer Steve Noble promote their new Bruce's Fingers CD *Axis Of Cavity*. Sheffield The Grapes (13 September), Resonance 104 4 FM/www resonancefm com (15, 8pm), London The Bonnington Centre (16), Colchester Arts Centre (18), London Flim Flam at Ryan's (25), Manchester The Green Room (26) www brucesfingers.com

BECK/HESSION/THOMAS
Improvising keyboards, sax and percussion trio Leeds Adelphi (2 & 26 September), Sheffield The Grapes (3) Paul Hession also plays a duo with saxophonist George Haslam at Lancaster Gregson Centre (27)

BUTTERFLIES OF LOVE
Widely-praised New Haven off kilter rockers promote their new album, *The New Patient*. London The Spitz (7 September), London 93 Feet East (25)

TERRY CALLIER
Veteran jazz folkie promotes his new album, *Speak Your Peace*. London Shepherds Bush Empire (22 September), Edinburgh Liquid Rooms (24), Brighton Concorde 2 (26), Derby Old Institute (29), Manchester University MDH (30)

CANON
Glaswegian 'rocktronica' quintet. Glasgow West 13th (10), Motherwell Starka Bar (12), Glasgow 13th Note Cafe (21). www.cannonmusic.co.uk

TANIA CHEN PLAYS JOHN CAGE
The programme includes Cage's 1951 indeterminate work for prepared piano, *Music Of Changes Books I IV*, alongside a newly commissioned work by John Lely. London Purcell Room, 22 September, 7:30pm, £10/£8, 020 7960 4242, www.rfh org.uk

STELLA CHIWESHE
The Queen of Zimbabwean thumb-piano. London The Spitz, 17 September, 8pm, £8/£6, 020 7392 9032, www.spitz co uk

DUNMALL/ROGERS/GIBBS + THE SWUNG TRIO
Two quality Improv trios Liverpool Bluecoat Arts Centre, 28 September, 8pm, £5/£4, www.bluecoatartscentre com

DAVID GRUBBS + NOËL AKCHOTÉ + THOMAS BELHOM
Avant guitar pickings and sidelong lyrics from the former Gastr Del Sol man and friends. Cork Triskel Arts Centre (27 September), Dublin Whelans (28), Manchester White Rabbit (1 October), Birmingham Flapper and Firkin (2), Nottingham The Social (3), Bristol Cube (4), London The Spitz (5)

LEE HAZLEWOOD
Twisted Country from the notorious Hazlewood with members of The High Llamas and Stereolab on what is supposed to be his last European tour Brighton Dome Concert Hall (21 September), London Royal Festival Hall (22). www hazlewood.com

LONDON IMPROVISERS' ORCHESTRA
Remarkable massed improvising collective. London Red Rose Club, 1 September and every first Sunday of the month, 8pm, £5/£3, 020 7263 7265

MOUSSA KOUYATE & KEVIN BROWN
Senegalese kora player in a duo with UK blues slide guitarist. London The Spitz, 22 September, 8pm, £6/£4 020 7392 9032, www spitz.co.uk

MÚM
Cute electronica from Icelandic Fat Cat signings. London The Spitz, 23 September, 8pm, £12/£10, 020 7392 9032, www spitz co.uk

OKURA/EZAKI/UNAMI
UK debut of a trio from Tokyo's new school of Zen Improv: Masahiko Okura on alto saxophone, Masafumi Ezaki on trumpet and Taku Unami on lap steel guitar and computer Plus the UK close listening trio of trumpeter Matt Davis, Phil Durrant on laptop and cellist Mark Wastell London Wheatsheaf Hall, 26 September, 8pm, £6/£5, 020 8348 9595, sound323@aol.com

OXBOW + NOXAGT
Steve Albini-produced noisegrinders Oxbow fly in from San Francisco to launch the second edition of *Hardcore Is More Than Music* fanzine Support comes from Norway's Noxagt featuring Kjetil D Brandsdal, Nought and DJ Spykid London ICA, 26 September, 020 7930 3647, www.ica.org.uk, www.theoxbow.com

PILOTE
Live electronica plus Selectadisc DJs. London The Social, 25 September, 7pm midnight, free, 020 734 3297

THE UNSEEMLY
Two Improv groupings. Mike Adcock/Mark Browne/Hugh Davies/Steve Nash and Dave Ryan/John Edwards/Mark Sanders. London Red Rose Club, 23 September, 8pm, £3, 01235 844261

VLADISLAV DELAY
Multi-textured electronic music from Finland supported by electronica duo Tennis and Antipodean laptop luminary Rosy Parlane. London Tate Modern, 28 September, 7:30 9:30pm, £6/£3, 020 7887 8888, plus Webcast at www.tate org.uk

JAMES YORKSTON + BRIDGET STORM
Scrappy trance-folk from Fife based Yorkston supported by acoustic songwriting duo. London The Spitz, 12 September, 8pm, £7, 020 7392 9032, www.spitz.co.uk

DHAFER YOUSSEF
Tunisian born vocalist and oud player blends his

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FABIO & GROOVERIDER
Friday 2-4am Vanguard drum 'n' bass

WESTWOOD RAP SHOW
Friday 11pm 2am/ Saturday 9pm-midnight
HipHop flavas

REGGAE DANCEHALL NITE
Saturday midnight-2am Bass culture

BBC RADIO 3 90-93 FM

LATE JUNCTION
Monday-Thursday 10:15 midnight
New Music compendium

JAZZ LEGENDS
Friday 4-5pm Archive recordings

ANDY KERSHAW
Friday 10.15 11 30pm. World Music

JAZZ ON 3
Friday 11 30pm 1am
Modern jazz in session and concert

WORLD ROUTES
Saturday 1 2pm
Lucy Duran presents a travelogue of global music

JAZZ FILE
Saturday 6-6 30pm
Documentary magazine

HEAR AND NOW
Saturday 10·45pm-1am. New Music magazine

MIXING IT
Sunday 11pm-midnight
Hyper-eclectic mix of avant sounds

Links to Net radio broadcasts can be found on *The Wire* Website: www.thewire co uk

Regional

BBC LANCASHIRE
95.5/103.9/104.5 FM, 855 MW

ON THE WIRE
Saturday 10pm-midnight. *The Wire*'s dub columnist Steve Barker mixes it up wildstyle

BBC MERSEYSIDE
95.8 FM, 1485 MW

PMS
Sunday midnight-2am. Eclectic mix of avant sounds

BBC SCOTLAND 92.4-94.7 FM

FROM BEBOP TO HIPHOP
Wednesday 7:05-9pm, Sunday 10:05pm-midnight
Jazz and nu-beats

CABLE RADIO 89.8 FM
(MILTON KEYNES)

THE GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS
Friday 10pm-midnight. Eclectic avant mix

KISS 100 FM (LONDON)

PATRICK FORGE
Sunday 10pm-midnight. Eclectic jazz-not-jazz mix

FROST AND HYPE
Sunday 3-5am. Jungle

4 HERO
Monday 2-4am. Jazz Jungle, cyber-soul, breakbeats

MATT JAM LAMONT
Wednesday 2-4am. More breakbeat science

LONDON LIVE 94.9 FM

SOLID STEEL
Monday midnight-2am
Mad mixing from the Ninja Tune mob

CHARLIE GILLETT
Saturday 8-10pm World Music, roots and R&B

RANKIN' MISS P: RIDDIMS & BLUES
Saturday 10pm-midnight. Strictly roots

RESONANCE 104.4 FM (LONDON)
Weekdays 5pm-1am, weekends midday-1am
Radical radio: details and streaming online at www.resonancefm.com (see Special Events)

XFM 104.9 (LONDON)

FLO-MOTION
Sunday 10pm-1am. Leftfield electronica

LAUNCH PRODUCTIONS

Ryoji Ikeda, Carsten Nicolai, Mika Vainio

CONCERTS: Baltic, Gateshead – 23 September
ICA, London – 24 September
La Villette, Paris – 28 September

***Übung*, Victoria**

PERFORMANCES: The Place, London – 18,19,20 October
Belfast Festival at Queen's – 30, 31 October
Contact Theatre, Manchester – 2 November
Tramway, Glasgow – 8,9,10 November

***National Grid*, Disinformation**

INSTALLATION: *Kill Your Timid Notion*, Dundee Contemporary Arts – 26, 27, 28 October

***Irons in the Fire*, Richard Wilson**

EXHIBITIONS: Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh. 8 November – 14 December
The Wapping Project, London. 16 January – 30 March 03

***formula [ver 1.0]*, Ryoji Ikeda**

CONCERT: Instal 02, The Arches, Glasgow - 1 December

***Patriots*, Ravi Deepres**

EXHIBITION: Hatton Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne. 18 January – 1 March 03

www.forma.org.uk

HAT

Words by **Ian McMillan**
Music by **Billy Jenkins**
From the avant garde to the W.I.,
a performance of words, music and knitting.

Sponsored by SIRDAR

[illegible] written and performed by Ian McMillan with music composed and performed by Billy Jenkins
Featuring Andy Diagram (ex James) on cornet, loops and samples, Angie Harrison (ex Haile) on viola and knitting needles.

"an uncompromising one off" Guardian

Produced by Simon Thackray

Friday 11 October Union Chapel, London
Compton Terrace, Islington
Doors 6.30pm, Knitting Class 7pm, Gig 8pm
Nearest Tube: Highbury & Islington

Tickets £14 (£11 Concessions) No Booking Fee
Telephone: 01494 270717 or 01654 668494
In Person: Reckless Records, 79 Upper Street, Islington, London. Online: **www.knit.co.uk**

Audience Invitation
You are welcome to knit during the performance

PRE-CONCERT KNITTING CLASS 7pm Presented by the Sirdar Knitting Team (Free wool & needles provided)

[illegible] commissioned by The Shed with funds from Yorkshire Arts. Supported by Yorkshire Arts, Yorkshire Forward, Arts and Business New Ventures. Sponsored by Sirdar

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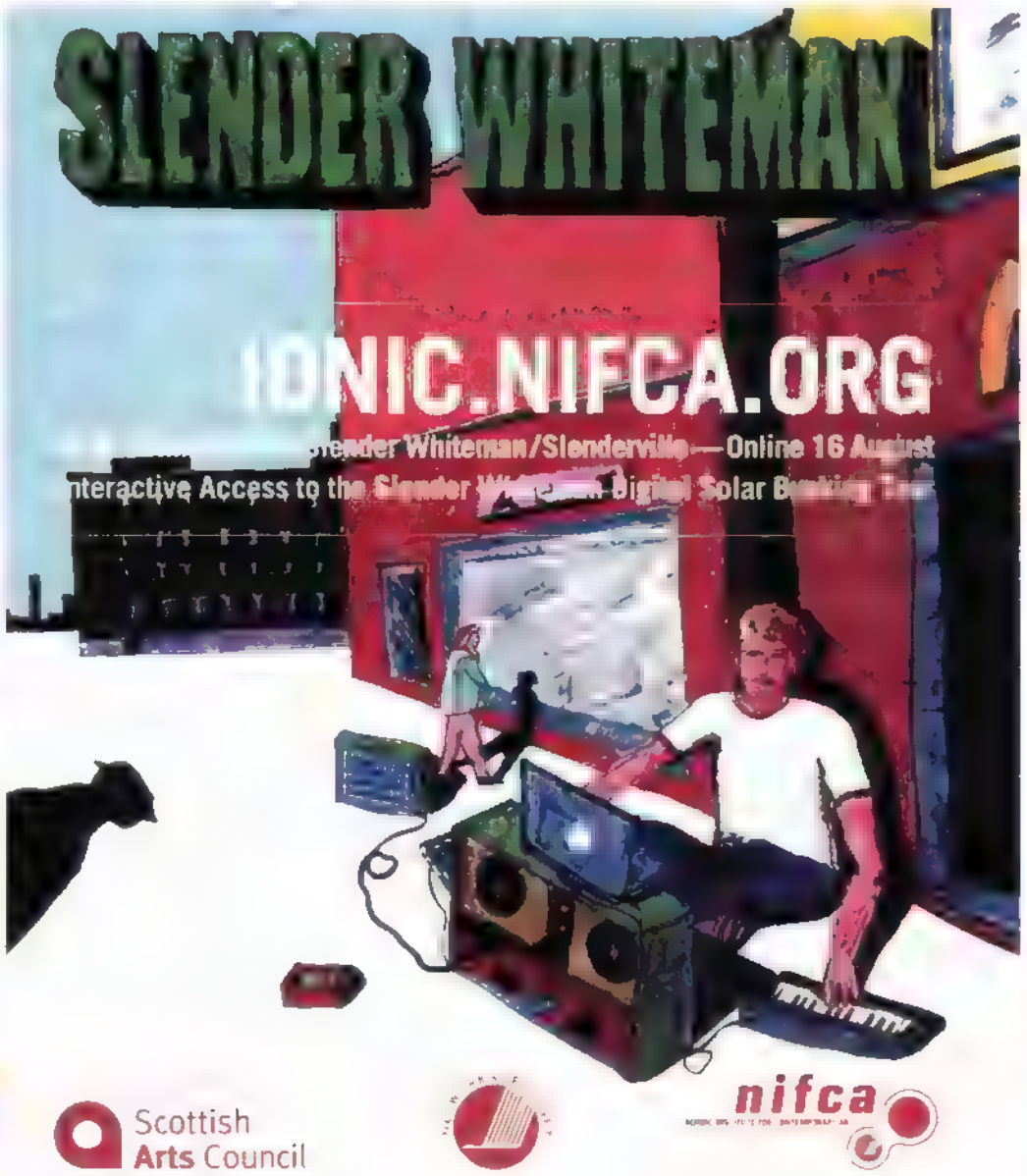

Sufi roots with other influences. London The Spitz, 19 September, 8pm, £12/£8, 020 7392 9032, www.spitz.co.uk

THE 21ST CENTURY SCHIZOID BAND
Original King Crimson 'family' members Michael Giles, Ian McDonald, Mel Collins and Peter Giles reunite for a UK tour for the first time since 1969. Level 42's Jakko Jakszyk takes on the guitar and lead vocal chores. Milton Keynes Stables Theatre (15 September), Crewe Limelight (17), Wolverhampton Robin 2 (19), Cambridge Corn Exchange (20), Newcastle The Opera House (21), Edinburgh Liquid Room (22), Croydon Fairfield Halls (25), Southampton The Brook (26), London Queen Elizabeth Hall (30)

Club spaces

AGENTS OF CHANGE
New monthly night from the art and music collective 404. This month the live debut of electric/acoustic instrumentalists Thunderbolt with 3D visuals. London Public Life, 1 September and first Sunday of every month, 6pm, free, 020 7375 2425, www.404design.co.uk

ANTI-APATHY
A politically driven and action oriented mix of words, music and film on the theme of (in)security. London The Spitz, 11 September, 8pm, £6/£5, 020 7392 9032, www.spitz.co.uk

THE BADORB ALLNIGHTER
Alex Paterson and The Orb return along with live Ambient dub from Autoump, Prayerbox & Fusion and various DJs including Jimmy Cauty. London Ocean, 28 September, 9pm-6am, £17.50, 020 8525 4273, www.ocean.org.uk

BAD TIMING
Cambridge's monthly session of digital lo-fi abstract beats and randomness returns. This month, live performances from Thrill Jockeys Andrew Coleman aka Animals On Wheels, Um and Ascoltare. Cambridge CB2 Internet Cafe, 25 September, 8:30pm, free, 01223 564728, www.bad-timing.co.uk

BAGGAGE RECLAIM
Monthly mix of "experimental music, post-Improv and neo-pop". This month features a solo saxophone performance from Evan Parker, rock complexity from The Jacobian, a set of 20 one-minute miniatures from Satan's Mahogany Long, and oblique songs from The Constant Arcade and club host Richard Sanderson. London 12 Bar Club, 29 September, 8pm, £6, 020 7916 6989, www.bagrec.com

BLACKTRONICA
Hip-hop and electronica night hosted by Attica Blues' Charlie Dark. London ICA, 4 September, 8pm-1am, £6/£4, www.ica.org.uk

THE BROWN BARREL
Irregular live space featuring 'torrent rock' from Opaque, 'wave refinery' from StrayLight and 'lapstrung disco' from unplugboy. Manchester Retro Bar, 18 September, 8.30pm-midnight, £3, 0161 274 4892, www.bfab.co.uk

COSEY
New monthly night of Krautrock, electronica, post rock and beyond. London On The Rocks, 27 September, 8pm, £6, 07802 785 562

EXTRA
Irregular 'slow sound system' audio-visual space returns. Collage and audioscapes from Nuuk, Datamath, Albert and Imax, plus Flash visuals, slideshows, photography, 8mm film, live CCTV and spy camera. London The Foundry, 15 September, 3pm-late, free, 0207 739 6900, www.slowsound.net

GOOD TIME PONY PRESENTS...
A packed evening of live music action. Krautrock style pop from Fujiya and Miyagi, eclectic beat driven soundscapes from Manchester's King Of Woolworths, and lo-fi post-rock whimsy from Junkboy. DJ duties by Asleep At The Wheel. London On The Rocks, 4 September, 8pm, £4, www.mantrarecordings.com, www.massiveadvance.com

KLINKER CLUB
Unfathomable music and performance space. This month the improbably named Oolicans, Austin Space Planet Ayres and Glue Stick and Scribble promising free bread and home made soup (5 September), Maggie Nicols/Ian McLachlan/Mary Morrison/Nick Stephens/Robin Musgrove, E Sid Erotica Da Esq (12), 17 minutes of Birdyak (Coxhill/Pike/Cobbing/Metcalfe), Stuart Ritchie & Jerry Bird, Full Monte featuring Chris Biscoe, Brian Godding, Marcio Mattos and Tony Marsh (19), Fuck Off Batman, Phil Gibbs/Paul Dunmall/Paul Rogers, steel cellist Adrian Palka (26), Jim LeBaigue & Gary Curzon, Tom Harwood & SF Ritchie, Holly Roberts & Anna Piana (27). London Sussex, 9pm, £4/£3, 020 8806 8216, www.theklinker.freeserve.co.uk

LAPTOP JAM
An open invitation to take part in an audio-visual jam. Bring your laptop and/or video footage. The event will be Webcast by havelina.com. Brighton Hanbury Arms, 10 September, 9pm, £3, 01273 605789, www.laptop-jams.com

MUSIC IS BETTER
An evening of multidirectional electronic music with Brian Eno collaborators Simian Mobile Disco, Roger and Radio 9. Plus DJs from Kosmische, Blue Light Fever and Mate Recordings. Manchester Band On The Wall, 16 September, 8pm, £4.50/£4, 0161 834 1786

NAMING THE GOLEM: SFARADIQ
Audiovisual club night with a French/North African flavour. French duo DuOud comprise oud player Medhdi and DJ Smadj, and are joined by UK group Fantazia featuring darbukka, violin and electric bass. The music is accompanied by Sophie Carle's photographic montages. There will also be a screening of Michale Boganim's award winning short *Memoires Uncertaines* plus DJs Al Slimani and Max Reinhardt. London ICA, 28 September, 8:15pm, 020 7930 3647, www.ica.org.uk

MISO
Bi-weekly alternately plugged and unplugged club. Miso Coustic features Slowlons and special guest (1 September), while Miso Tronic features electronica and electro with guests to be confirmed (15). Glasgow Captain's Rest, 7pm, £2, www.deepburnt.com

ONGAKU: ENJOY SOUND
A new improvised music series in a church now converted into a gallery and bar. This month features Alan Wilkinson/Hugh Metcalfe/Paul May, Steve Noble/Simon Fell/Ross Lambert/Nathanie Catchpole and Yum Hara solo. London 291 Gallery, 24 September, 8pm, £5/£2, 020 7613 5676

PHOTEK RECORDS @ TRAFFIC
Breakbeat hero Photek returns alongside Goldie, Roni Size, Doc Scott and others. London Club Colosseum, 14 September, 10.30pm-6am, £10-£6, 020 7627 1283

PLUG AND PLAY
Open house for laptop and other electrically powered audio and visual artists. London Public Life, 22 September and every third Sunday of the month, 6pm, 07779 631008, www.gabba.net/pnp

THE REMIX NIGHT
Bastard pop and bootlegging in DJ sets from Deadly Avenger and XFM residents James Hyman and Eddy Temple-Morris. London Cargo, 20 September, 7pm-1am, £7-£5

REPHLEX DISCO ASSAULT SOUND SYSTEM
A night of stoned electronica hosted by Aphex Twin's label. Reading Plug 'n' Play Studios, 7 September, 9pm, £6, 0118 958 1447, response@stickydekfeet.co.uk

REVOLVER
The Manchester space comes to London with Elliot Eastwick's pub quiz, a marathon drum 'n' bass session from Fabio, and House from Paper Recordings. London 333, 7 September, 10pm-5am, £12-£5, 020 7739 5949

SECLUDED BRONTË
This month's name for the Bohman Brothers' Improv weekly. Lomo, The Bohman Brothers (2 September), Yngvil Vatn Guttu, Max Bénézeth & Simm Linsolas, Alex Impey (9), Mike Johns & Will Evans, Badland (16), 16mm film night (23), Sandy Kindness & Eddie Prevost, Dave Fowler/Julia Doyle/Susie Honeyman/Gill Walshaw (30). London The Bonnington Centre, 8pm, £4/£3, 01932 571323

SEQUENCER VARIETY CLUB
New ICA night with live sets from Schneider TM, Max Tundra and Cursor Miner. London ICA, 21 September, 8:30pm, £10-£8, 020 7930 3647, www.ica.org.uk

Incoming

FERTILISER
UK
Ambitious festival showcasing a wide range of new Norwegian music including Phonophani, Arve Henriksen, Close Erase, Jaga Jazzist, Spunk, Xploding Plastic, Nils Økland Trio, Food and more. London 93 Feet East, 9-13 October, www.plus47.com/fertiliser

THE WIRE 20: PARIS
FRANCE
As part of *The Wire*'s 20th anniversary celebrations, two Paris venues, Instants Chavirés and Batofar, host a five day event encompassing avant jazz, improv, electronica, trance rock, turntablism, electroacoustics and beyond. The line up at Instant Chavirés includes In The Tradition featuring Alan Silva and Roger Turner (14 October), Jackie-O Motherfucker, Volcano The Bear (15), Evan Parker & Lawence Casserley, Keith Rowe & Oren Ambarchi (16), John Wall & Mark Edwards, Philip Jeck (17). Instant Chavirés, 00 33 1 42 87 25 91, instants.chavires@wanadoo.fr, www.instantschavires.fr.st. The line up at Batofar includes Electreiane, Luomo, Portable (15 October), Techno Animal, The Bug vs Tech Level 2 (16), Circle, V/VM, Portable (17), Max Tundra, Porter Ricks (18). *The Wire* Sound System will also be in attendance. Batofar, 00 33 1 40 33 37 17, batofar@batofar.org, www.batofar.org

Out There items for inclusion in the October issue should reach us by Friday 30 August

"From a turmoil of noise emerges an adventurous and emotional integration of live sound, movement and image" *De Groene Amsterdammer, Netherlands*

A stunning mixed media extravaganza featuring
Gail Brand trombone
Julia Clarke dance
Gabriela Solin dance
Rhodri Davies harp
Anne Nigten video
Steve Noble percussion
Nick Rothwell computer programming
Stan Winans sound effect design video mixdown
www.l-m-c.org.uk

LMC

Frozen White

Produced and arranged by Stan Winans

the holding by Anne Nigten & Nick Rothwell

September 6, 7 & 8 at 8pm
Institute of Contemporary Arts
The Mall, London SW1
Tickets & Info 020 7930 3647
www.ica.org.uk

LONDON ARTS ICA

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'THE MUSIC OF JOBIM'
JAQUES MORELENBAUM
PAULA MORELENBAUM

Saturday 21 September 7.30pm
ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL
020 7960 4242 / www.rfh.org.uk

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A FORCE OF NATURE TAKING THE
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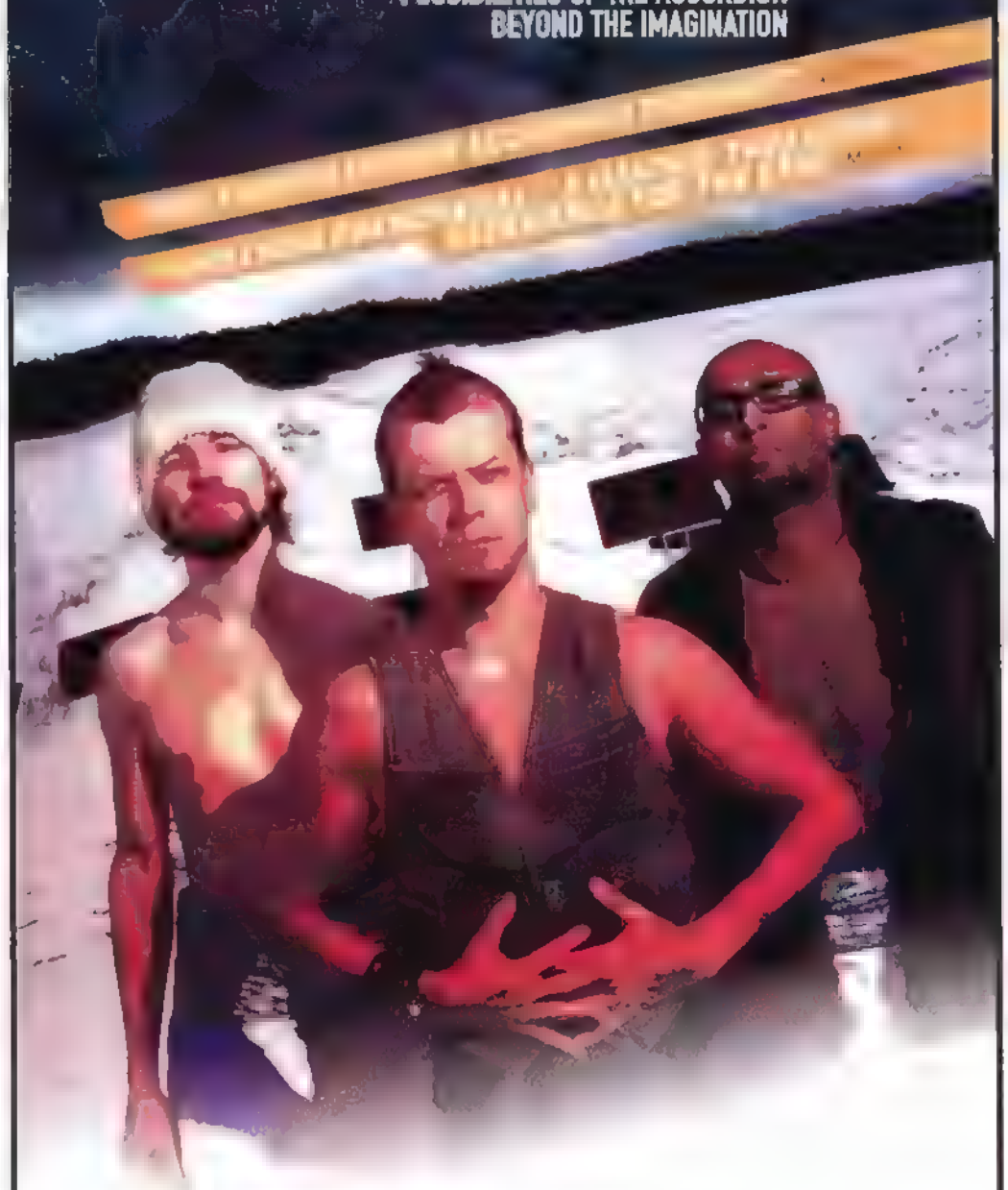

IN YOUR TOWN NOW

Wed **30** Oct	**MANCHESTER** Royal Northern College of Music 0161 907 5555
Thu **31** Oct	**COVENTRY** Warwick Arts Centre 024 7652 4524
Sat **2** Nov	**NEWCASTLE** All Saints Church 0191 443 4555
Mon **4** Nov	**BRIGHTON** Gardner Arts Centre 01273 709709 / 01273 685861
Tue **5** Nov	**LONDON** Queen Elizabeth Hall 020 7960 4242

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Directory

Label/distributor contacts for this month's issue

Labels

KEY: T = tel F = fax D = distributor

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www.magicandaccident.com
Ace Fu Recordings
PO Box 552, New York, NY 10009, USA
www.acefu.com
Ad Noiseam
info@adnoiseam.net www.adnoiseam.net
Afrodisiac
Afrodisiacrecords.com
Altered Vibes
www.stage.vitaminic.fr/main/altered_vibes/
Alku
principio@limites.personal.limites.principio
Ambush
F 020 7737 1890 djscudo@psicorps.com cB.com/ambush
D Shellshock
AMMP
74 Broadmoor Ave, San Anselmo, CA 94960, USA
T/F 001 415 456 5963 info@ammp.com
Angelika Köhlermann
c/o Tex Rubinowitz, Muenzwardeingasse 2, 1060 Vienna,
Austria F 00 43 1 581 28 13 gerard@eunet.at
Anomalous
PO Box 22195, Seattle, WA 98122-0195, USA
F 001 206 328 9408 orders@anomalousrecords.com
www.anomalousrecords.com
Asphodel
763 Brannan St, San Francisco, CA 94103, USA
info@asphodel.com www.asphodel.com D Pinnacle
Audio Research
www.audioresearch.net
Auditorium
Via Paolo 14, 20135, Milan, Italy
audnet@galactica.it
Aurore Nocturne
momo@dreverdrive.com www.aurorenocturne.com
Autobus/Trace Label
162 Rue Saint Maur, 75011 Paris, France
F 00 33 1 4929 7670 dragib@club-internet.fr
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surefire@tiac.net D Shellshock
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PO Box 11453, 1001 GL Amsterdam
The Netherlands staal@euronet.com
www.staalplaat.com
D These
Battersea Park Music
T 001 614 299 6681 www.batterseaparkmusic.com
Best Seven
www.biggabush.co.uk
Beta Bodega Coalition
www.betabodega.de
Big Daddy Recordings
www.thebigdaddy.com
Bip-Hop
BP64, 13192 Marseille Cedex 20, France
T/F 00 33 491 64 89 15 bip@bip-hop.com
Blast First
429 Harrow Road, London W10 4RE
F 020 8960 5459 www.mute.com D Vital
Blue Juice
www.bluejuice.co.uk
Blue Minor Records
richard@blueminorrecords.com
www.blueminorrecords.com
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PO Box 2192, Bloomington, IN 47402-2192, USA
www.bluesanct.com
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Cadence Building, Redwood, NY 13679, USA
F 001 315 287 2860 cjr@cadencebuilding.com
D Impetus
Camjazz
T 00 39 06 69 74 220 F 00 39 06 68 74 046
info@camjazz.com www.camjazz.com
Cantaloupe Music
222 East 5th Street #12, New York, NY 10003, USA
cantaloupe@bangonacan.org D Harmonia Mundi
Captain Trip
3-17-14 Minami Koiwa, Edogawa-ku, Tokyo, Japan
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T 001 212 217 0307 todd@carparkrecords.com
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www.counterflowrecordings.com
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www.crippledintellectproductions.net
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info@ghostly.com www.ghostly.com
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www.home.tscalinet.be/mokproduction
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Mills College Music Department, 5000 Macarthur Boulevard
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The Netherlands staal@euronet.com www.staalplaat.com
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F 020 8964 2989 D Vita
Spectral Sounds
322 S State Street Number Four Ann Arbor MI 48104 USA
Studio K7
Leipzigerstrasse 54 10117 Berlin Germany
F 00 49 30 2044456 office@studio-K7.de D Vita
L'empreinte Digitale
63 Rue Consolat 13001 Marseille France
T 00 33 4 95 04 30 28 F 00 33 4 91 62 53 16
ed@guivet.fr www.lempreintedigitale.com
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T 020 8523 9578 F 020 8523 9671
info@lewisrecordings.com www.lewisrecordings.com
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Run by
Wojt3k Kucharczyk

Roster includes
Molr Drammaz, *Retro*Sex*Galaxy*, Pathman, Paul Wirkus/Uwe Schneider, Sebastian Buczek, Tojetakecotaketo, Wojt3k K, 8 Rolek, Deuce, Go Underground To See More Animals

Brief History
Mikro is a home-based label from southern Poland, established by the group Molr Drammaz around 1995. The real boom came with CD-Rs. Mik musik is one of the most active CD-R labels in Poland (and probably Europe), with 21 titles on catalogue to date plus some unnumbered special editions. We occasionally release different media from time to time – vinyl, CD, floppy disk, VHS tape... and it is even possible to buy an original beeswax record by Sebastian Buczek! Most of the releases are packed with very fine, handprinted covers, hand numbered, usually limited to 111 copies

Statement of Intent
Ideology is not the point. We just like to release worthwhile music. Mik.musik is also exploring Polish hills and valleys in search of unknown, brilliant sounds, because an important part of our work is to show the world debut releases of young local artists. We believe in people with big ears, minds, hearts (and smaller stomachs). We try to be like them

Other activities
We deal with visual arts, video, multimedia, organise concerts, help to arrange special events and festivals with other labels, etc. I am really involved in education – graphic design and 'New Media'. Some of my former students are cooperating with Mik.musik, doing special drawings, comics, Internet things

Future Plans
To create work connecting music and visuals in an organic, new way. Big explorations are required still. Standard stereo is not enough for us already, so we have some ideas... The market for underground music in Poland is more and more difficult. One plan is to make a bigger project internationally. In autumn this year Mik is planning a European tour for Molr Drammaz; in spring 2003 we would like to visit the USA with some gigs. The dream is to record something live in Brazil

Info and manifesto: Wojt3k Kucharczyk

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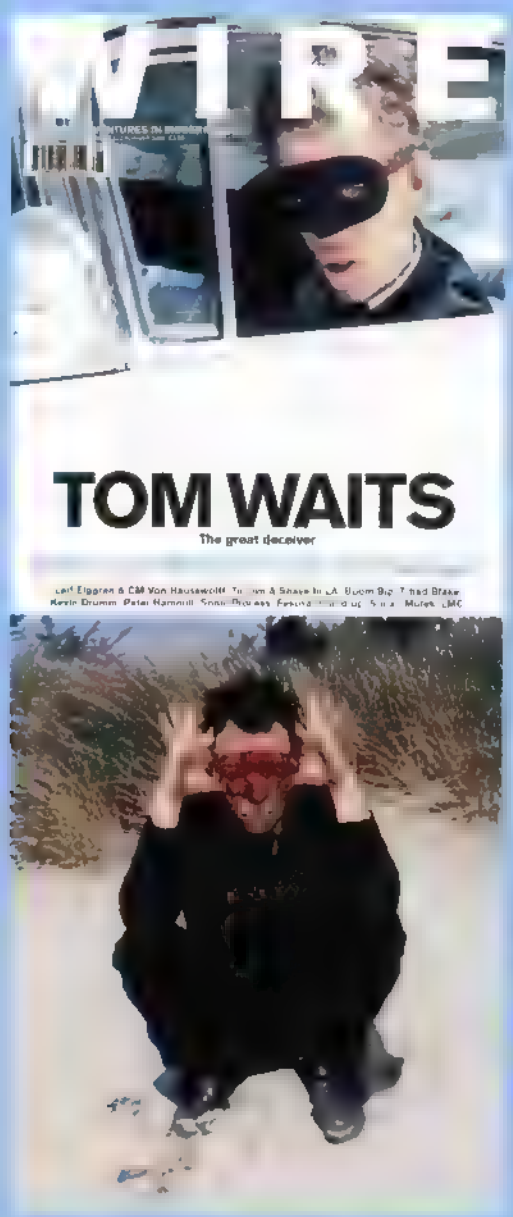

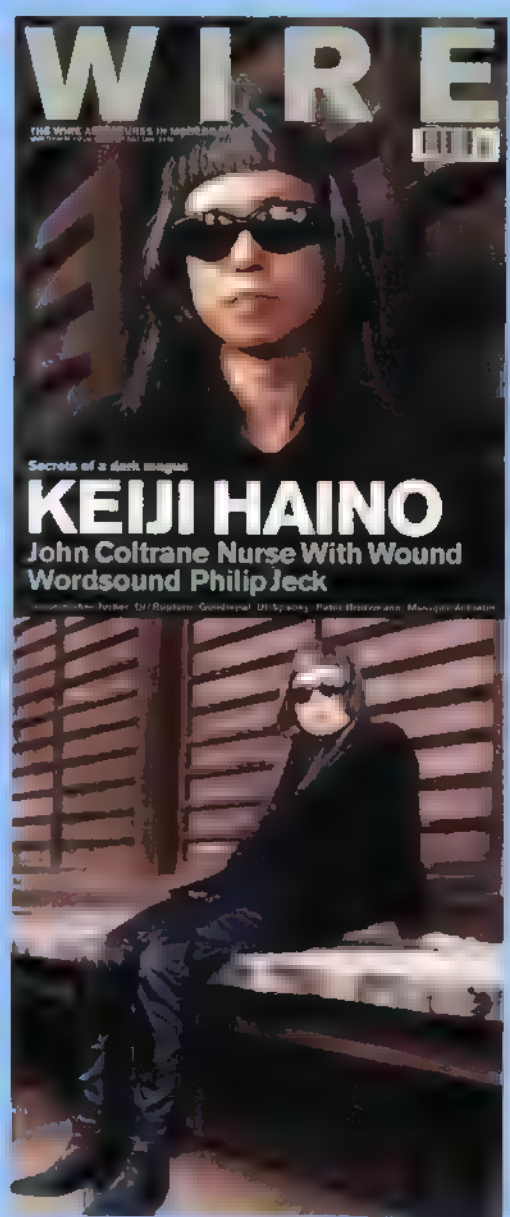

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DOUBLE OCTOBER 2000 ISSUE 200

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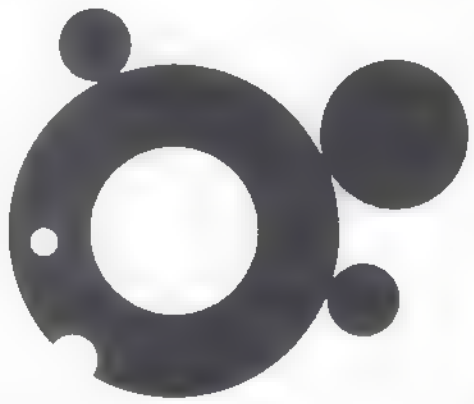

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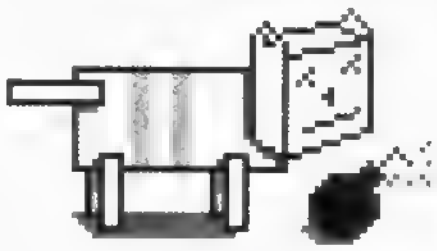

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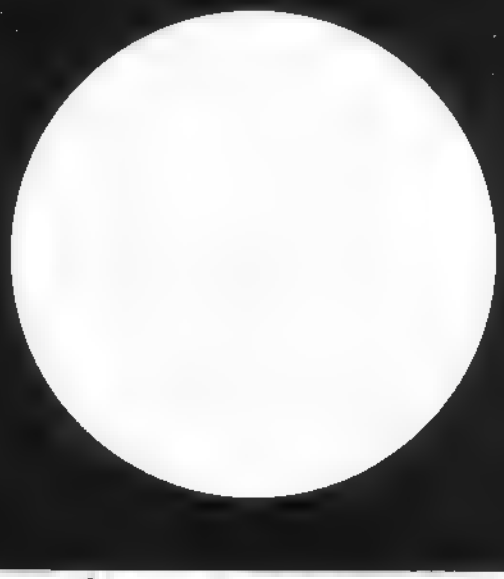

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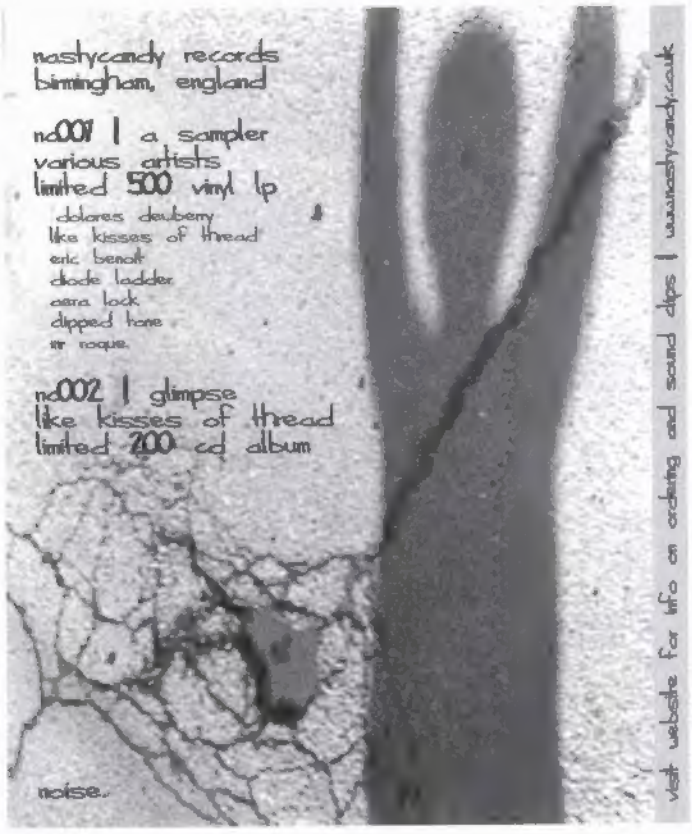

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Epiphanies

In 1969, Mike Westbrook's large scale anti-war music provided the rallying flag for the UK's massing free jazz ranks. By John Cratchley

Peace march: Mike Westbrook (right) and his late 60s big band

In the late 60s, the British avant garde jazz scene, being new to me, seemed to exude relentless, groundbreaking intensity. It felt exciting, immediate and – most importantly – accessible. This view hasn't diminished over time: in hindsight, this period's acute sense of self-realisation and the musicians' belief in their own ability to create and sustain a valid, independent identity still appears inspirational. The scene knew it was coming of age, and this confidence regularly manifested itself in small back room venues. On a weekly basis, for instance, it was possible to catch the likes of young saxophonists John Surman, Mike Osborne and Alan Skidmore (not yet combined as SOS) with their own groups. These groups would typically include, amongst others, drummers Alan Jackson and John Marshall, bassist Harry Miller and trombonists Malcolm Griffiths and Paul Rutherford. Personnel line-ups were fluid, interchangeable and promiscuous.

The one name that kept cropping up at gigs with a respectful buzz, however, was that of pianist and composer Mike Westbrook. After all, most of the musicians mentioned above played in his ensembles and it was a reasonably small scene. He played frequently but the little back rooms didn't allow for massed ranks of improvisors so his compositional skills were confined to small group arrangements. You had to resort to vinyl to get the full scope of his talent. *Celebration* and *Release* (both put out by Deram) opened up a new concept for me. Accustomed to hearing extended blowing from the likes of Surman and Osborne in open and fairly loose contexts, it had never really occurred to me that this incendiary, unrestrained spirit could be integrated into a formalised structure of highly disciplined arrangements, giving those transcendent moments of free expression a context in which to feel even more meaningful. Westbrook had precisely that quality.

In 1968 my local college uncharacteristically booked Westbrook's concert group. My three principal memories of that evening are the anarchic blitzkrieg unleashed by saxophonist George Khan of the contemporaneous People Band; the immediate acceptance of an unfamiliar musical vocabulary by a rock oriented college audience; and a conversation I had with Westbrook in the interval. He dropped a few hints about a project he was working on that dealt with the futility of war. It was going to follow a theme (basically a 'concept album') and develop a musical 'everyman' story. It duly saw the light of day in 1969.

There are albums that weave themselves into the fabric of your life and inform subsequent events. They possess a stature that becomes a constant by which you invoke universal truths. For me, *Marching Song* (Deram) has this relevance. The one hour 40 minute suite had to be spread over two volumes, which were packaged as separate items, not as a double album. The massed ranks of the Mike Westbrook Concert Band boasted 26 players and represented a who's who of the new jazz scene. Trumpeters included Kenny Wheeler and Dave Holdsworth, and there was a twin tuba line-up of Martin Fry and George Smith. Saxophonists Surman, Osborne, Skidmore and Khan, as well as John Warren and Bernie Living, were present and Westbrook used three bass players (Miller, Barre Phillips and Chris Lawrence) and a twin drum onslaught (Jackson and Marshall). This was a massive and unconventional ensemble, even by Westbrook's standards.

The cover art, depicting children's crayon drawings of the battlefield (tanks, planes, bombs, parachutes) was both unusual for the time and arresting in its naivety. It acted as the perfect antithesis for the music contained within, which was unequivocal in its intentions. This was a significant anti-war statement made with great erudition by a man mustering and mastering all the forces he could bring to his disposal. Relishing a large-group resource that many others would find totally unwieldy, he composed a suite that was by turns stark and bitter as well as wistful and poignant. His ability to portray, in musical terms, the chaos of Armageddon and to place the individual within it is unmatched to this day. On *Marching Song*, Westbrook, equally at home with the singular voice (search out his 1978 solo album *Piano*, rereleased by Impetus in 1995) as well as the small and large ensemble, distributes and juxtaposes these diverse forces both to enhance the dramatic flow and envelop the listener. The suite is broken into sections with appropriately 'universal' names ("Home", "Landscape", "Conflict", "Memorial", "Requiem") that open out the perspective of its subject matter.

Although initially inspired by a vivid nightmare, much of Westbrook's impetus for the work came from his post-world war two National Service experiences in Europe. The flattened and desolate consequences of that conflict, when applied to 1969, had a more contemporary resonance. Vietnam and Northern Ireland informed our daily lives through incessant but largely sanitised media coverage. *Marching Song*'s extensive storyboard acted as a reminder that war was a curse that affected everybody, and addressed not only the horrors of combat but also questioned issues such as patriotism and national pride. Westbrook presents the total obscenity of war through all its political and personal machinations, placing the work on an equal footing with Benjamin Britten's massive 1961 choral work, *War Requiem*. As Westbrook's own liner notes to the suite conclude: "How can men forget? Tidy it up with a slab of stone, a flower, a wreath... A brass band to hide the screams of the dead."

The playing throughout is sublime, with committed soloing ably rising to Westbrook's delicate and complex ensemble charts. It was a pivotal event for Westbrook and the British new jazz scene. The album also consolidated the reputations of many of the musicians involved, who went on to form important groups of their own: Rutherford's Iskra 1903; The Trio, the outfit consisting of Surman, Phillips and drummer Stu Martin; jazz composers Kenny Wheeler and John Warren. The musical and thematic stature of the work (and its critical acceptance) brought a new level of credibility and confidence to musicians and audience alike. It indicated that important and controversial subjects could be addressed by new musical forms. Free improvisation had embraced structural integrity as well as unfettered expression. It also proved that avant garde jazz had inherent scope and room to flourish. The music needed a standard bearer and Westbrook had placed himself in the vanguard. *Marching Song* remains inextricably linked to the fervent outpouring of the continuously challenging music supplied on such a regular basis in those long-forgotten little back rooms. I've played it a great deal in the intervening years (there's been a lot of conflict to come to terms with) and it has lost none of its potency. □

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